

# THE UNDERGROUND AND EDUCATION

A Guide to the Alternative Press

MIKE SMITH



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A GUIDE TO THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS



"The question is,  
which is to be  
master, that's all."

METHUEN

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## Introduction

## Acknowledgements

The author and the publisher would like to thank the many authors whose arguments have been quoted or alluded to in this book. Care has been taken to indicate the source of such arguments so that interested readers may follow them up if they wish to.

Thanks are also given to the alternative publications from which the illustrations in this book were taken:  
Illustration on title page *Humpty Dumpty* 3; page 17 *Blackbored* 4; page 29 *Libertarian Education* 18; pages 38-9 *Libertarian Education* 15; page 44 *Libertarian Education* 10; pages 56-7 *Libertarian Education* 18; page 76 *Humpty Dumpty* 3; page 90 *Radical Education* 2; page 101 *Libertarian Education* 20; page 133 *Humpty Dumpty* 3; page 153 *Ten Days that Shook the University*

The purpose of this book is to provide a guide to the critique of education found in the underground press. Such a guide can be justified on two grounds: the importance of the ideas involved and their relative inaccessibility. The best way to become acquainted with the alternative press is to go and read it, and if this book encourages more people to do that I shall be pleased. But it is not always easy, with alternative publications, to find the particular item one wants, especially if it is a past number, and because of this a reader may gain only partial access to what amounts to a substantial critique. The fairly detailed bibliography which I provide at the end of this book will, I hope, give readers some help in locating particular alternative publications that

they are interested in. The alternative critique of education as a whole, however, deserves more extended attention.

The critique is to be found in a variety of pamphlets, booklets, leaflets, cyclostyled sheets and, increasingly, titled folders, few of which are obtainable through ordinary commercial channels. The rapid growth of such publications seems a feature of the contemporary move towards pluralism in our society. Each area of knowledge, it seems, generates its own alternative literature: philosophy begets *Radical Philosophy*, psychology *Humpty Dumpty* and *Red Rat*, social work *Case-Con*. In education alternative publications are legion. Some of them, such as *Libertarian Education* and *Radical Education*, are published fairly regularly; others, such as *Antistudent* and *The Great Brain Robbery*, are one-off jobs; and yet others, such as *Hard Cheese* and the defunct but still obtainable *Blackbored*, fall somewhere between the two. It is from publications such as these that the arguments considered in this book are taken. The arguments are not to be taken uncritically, but they are to be taken seriously. Together, they constitute a radical critique of our education system which no one involved in, or interested in, education can afford to ignore.

Much of this critique is directed towards a special cluster of issues. These issues are not the ones familiar to us from the widespread discussions of educational reform which have been characteristic of developing societies ever since the end of the war. The alternative critics are not concerned, at least not primarily, with such things as classroom innovation, change in teaching styles or ways of assessment, streaming or banding, or curriculum development. What does concern them is what persists while all this is changing: the patterns of relationships presupposed in the educational system, the premises which teachers unconsciously bring to the educational system and which affect their ways of operating, the messages which these very ways of operating and the educational system itself send out to learners. The alternative critics are concerned, that is,

with the hidden curriculum rather than with the curriculum.

In this book we shall examine the alternative press's treatment of some of these issues. Before beginning, however, some preliminary points may be made about the alternative press itself. Anyone familiar with the development of publishing in England will be aware that the radical press has a long history. What is new about the alternative press (and this is a matter of degree only) is, firstly, the importance of its links with the growing world of higher education, and, secondly, the development of small-scale printing technology. The former gives it material and a market; the latter opens up the possibility of production to almost any group of interested people. New ways of duplicating and printing, and the ready availability of facilities in libraries, colleges, schools, student union offices and 'movement' workshops have brought about what the alternative press refers to as 'The Litho Revolution'.

The significance of this to the alternative movement goes beyond the technical, as is made clear by many of the publications. *Antistudent*, for instance, devotes its entire back cover to a statement of how it was produced. In the first place it describes the actual techniques (typing, not printing, followed by photographic reduction) used in its production, in the hope that this will inform and encourage others. But then, more important, it goes on to set out the ideological significance of publishing in this way. 'All our lives we've read stuff other people have written', it begins. 'Because we see something in print we tend to be impressed by it and think it must be authoritative. But when we write and print something for ourselves we become more critical. "The Authority of the Printed Word is smashed." Moreover, whereas in the past if we wanted to say anything in print we had to route our communication via some authority figure, an editor or publisher or someone of that sort, and run the risk of selection or amendment or censorship, now anyone who wishes to can "say it directly their way to the audience they choose."' 'The litho revolution, like video, has decentralist possibilities

that are libertarian.' Instead of being a Them medium, print becomes a People's medium.

The 'litho revolution' may have opened up exciting new possibilities for the alternative press so far as production is concerned; it has not, however, affected distribution, and it is here that alternative publications tend to run into trouble. Lacking access to the big, national, distributive networks of the established publishers, many alternative publishing ventures blossom for a time but then wither.

In a way, this may not matter. Many people in the alternative movement would resist the idea of becoming too regular, too dependable, too taken for granted, too institutionalised. Some of the best alternative publications are one-off jobs: others appear, as a matter of policy, irregularly. Nevertheless, it is always exciting when something you have produced catches on and more people want to read it, and it must be frustrating to meet so many problems when it comes to reaching out to a wider audience. From the point of view of the reader it is certainly frustrating that there is no reliable distributive network.

It is only fair to add that efforts are being made to remedy this. Many large towns now have at least one alternative bookshop and some of these are getting together to try to form an independent distribution system. Alternative bookshops tend to come and go, but a lot of useful work is being done in this area at the moment by Rising Free, a London collective which runs a non-profit-making alternative bookshop and information centre. Apart from keeping a fairly large stock of alternative publications and producing most useful catalogues and book lists, it has the addresses of similar enterprises operating in other parts of the country and maintains some contact with them. It is also, most ambitiously, attempting to set up a free library of alternative materials. Other alternative bookshops are trying to do similar things. Inevitably, however, they are under-capitalised, and tend to act as separate centres of information rather than as parts of a coherent distributive network.

Such a network could be said to exist in the machinery for distributing NUS publications. Most Student Unions have a 'bookshop', even if it only takes the form of a stall open every so often. These bookshops usually stock some alternative material, and what material is not stocked can easily be ordered through NUS machinery. The problem here is that the stock is often small and ordering it the responsibility of gallant but under-informed local helpers. If a purchaser knows what he wants he can usually get it; but the system is much less effective when it comes to extending the readership of alternative, or, indeed, any other materials. In any case, the NUS network, though national, is restricted to a highly selected membership, and though there are close links between the student world and the alternative movement, the network hardly provides access to alternative publications for most readers.

The reader is thrown back, therefore, on his own resources. He has to work hard if he wants to read widely in the alternative press. This may not be a bad thing. At least it means that he is likely to be an active reader rather than a passive one. But anyone who has had the experience of trying to track down what he believes to be an exciting piece of alternative writing, and which proves to be next to impossible to lay his hands on, will wish that there was some alternative equivalent to the Bodleian Library, a public library to which at least one copy of any alternative publication is sent. Perhaps Rising Free's free library will do something to meet that need.

Meanwhile, the alternative publications themselves do what they can to help. Many of them include bibliographies and lists of helpful addresses. *Antistudent*, for example, gives over four of its thirty-seven pages to 'Info', under which heading it includes lists of Movement organisations, Movement printing presses and alternative bookshops, as well as a general bibliography of current available alternative publications, broken down into a general list of magazines and newspapers, and specialist lists grouped by subject (e.g. Deschooling, Counter-Culture) of books and

pamphlets. *The Great Brain Robbery* has a three-page bibliography under the general heading of 'libertarian education', and *Libertarian Education*, the magazine, which appears regularly, usually devotes a page to listing current alternative publications.

The following is an example of the kind of reading list found in alternative publications.

*The Peoples (sic) Reading List 1974*

Education and Society	Rank and File
Language and Class	Rosen
Libertarian Education (magazine)	
Antistudent	
Student as Nigger	Jerry Farber
Notes on American Education	John Holt
White Lion St. Free School (bulletin)	
High School Revolt	USA
Our Schools must serve the Working Class	Canada
Adult Education	
Little Red School book	
Y-Front (magazine)	
Hard Cheese (magazine)	
How the West Indian Child is made ESN	Bernard Coard
Stepney Words 1, 2	Centerprise
The Great Brain Robbery	Keith Paton

It is from lists such as these that the potential reader of the alternative press learns about the field. Most lists are, of course, considerably longer. I give a more comprehensive alternative bibliography at the end of the book.

Several things strike one about the reading lists. In the first place there is the difficulty of deciding what is alternative and what is not. By no means all the items that appear in the lists are themselves products of the alternative press. One finds, for example, perfectly 'straight' academic studies such as Partridge's *Life in a secondary modern school*, or Rosenthal and Jacobson's

*Pygmalion in the classroom* or D.H. Hargreaves's *Social Relations in the Secondary School*. In the list quoted above Harold Rosen's *Language and Class* seems a standard critique of Bernstein: and even though it appears to have been published through the small press, it is an extended version of a paper given at Ruskin. Every list includes a large number of Penguins, some of which (e.g. Goffman's *Asylums*) are academic studies though with a slant interesting to alternative readers; some are more obviously radical (*Education for Democracy*, by Rubinstein and Stoneman); and some belong to the mythology of the alternative movement (Leila Berg's *Risinghill – Death of a Comprehensive School*, A.S. Neill's *Summerhill*.) In addition there are paperback editions of the works of gurus such as Ivan Illich, Paul Goodman, and Paulo Freire and of aficionados such as John Holt. And, of course, any specialist sub-section, such as, for example, *Black Liberation*, will include a host of references to such people as Fanon, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and George Jackson. Curiously, perhaps, *Counter-Culture* is almost invariably found as a sub-section. It is never, that is, seen as synonymous with the whole alternative movement, not even in non-political alternative publications. Under the heading of *Counter-Culture* fall references to such people as Marcuse, Laing, Leary and Norman Brown.

One needs, therefore, to distinguish between works which are specifically products of the alternative press and works which are more generally part of the alternative culture. In this book I shall be concerned primarily with the former.

Even if one so restricts oneself, problems of definition remain. On the one hand magazines such as *Libertarian Education* sometimes include work, often an extract from a normally published book or article, by such writers as Illich or Holt. On the other, points of view which at one stage find expression chiefly in alternative publications, at a later stage are able to find an outlet through more orthodox publishing channels. An example of this has occurred recently in the field of the sociology of education, where a viewpoint which tended at one

time to be expressed chiefly through the alternative press has now become the dominant orientation of part of an Open University course.

This brings me to the second feature of the alternative press, as reflected in its reading lists, its strongly theoretical character. Alternative publications are concerned with ideas not personalities. It is not by accident that Rosen's critique of Bernstein is included in the list above, that the first half of Keith Paton's *The Great Brain Robbery* is devoted to an intellectual dialogue with R.S. Peters, that *Hard Cheese* includes such articles as 'The psychology of child psychology', 'The teacher as researcher -- a key to innovation and change', 'A few notions about the word 'Conscientization' -- Paulo Freire', 'The transmission of an educational ideology' (all in the first number); that Goffman, Partridge and Hargreaves appear in the reading lists; or that *Counter-Course: a handbook for course criticism* (Penguin) has a ninety-page bibliography which makes the reading lists of most university courses look amateur.

The relationship of the alternative press to the academic world is close. Its readership comes largely from students and those who have recently been students. Its editors and contributors are often post-graduate students or young lecturers. Often, too, the origins of a particular publication can be found in a theoretical dispute, in the difficulty of finding a vehicle for expressing a viewpoint at odds with a prevailing academic consensus.

Such viewpoints are important for the development of knowledge. They may reflect a new approach within a discipline which in time may find more general acceptance. Meanwhile, they can be exposed through the alternative press to the comment, disagreement and discussion which publication brings and be made known to those sympathetic to the approach. One of the fascinations of the alternative press is that one can sometimes pick up new ideas at an early stage of their development.

One should not, however, minimise the distance that there is between the alternative press and the 'straight' press. Some

viewpoints diverge so radically from accepted views that they can find expression only in alternative media.

This is particularly likely to be the case where the viewpoints adopt a frame of reference which is totally different from that normally taken for granted. Much academic, and other, discussion in our society takes place within an apparently common frame of reference which is never itself exposed to critical scrutiny. Approaches which are discrepant with that, with the tacit 'rules of the game', tend to be excluded. In contrast, debate in the alternative press is seldom debate within one single frame of reference: it is nearly always debate between frames of reference.

An example may, perhaps, make this clear. Whatever the quality of the argument, an explicitly Marxist account of the 'selection' of knowledge for the school curriculum is not very likely to find expression in normal academic journals. In the alternative press it certainly would find expression: but so would other different and opposing viewpoints. In the view of the alternative critics academic debate in our society suffers from being conducted within too exclusive a frame of reference. What the alternative press seeks to do is to extend the scope of academic debate by bringing the frame into the picture, by subjecting the frame of reference itself to rational inquiry, and by comparing the insights available within it with the insights which other frames of reference make available.

The example I have just given was of a contribution from within a political frame of reference. The philosophies encountered in the alternative press are many and various and by no means all of them have political implications. But the example brings me conveniently to the third feature of the alternative press which I would like to comment on, and that is its political reference.

There is a curious taboo on political discussion in our society, a tacit censorship which acknowledges some subjects as fit for political discussion and at the same time rules out others. This is especially unfortunate when one of the features of our contemporary culture seems to be a changing connotation for the



word 'political'. Many things which in the past were not seen as political – the treatment of one group of people by another, the differential treatment of two groups of people (call them sexes, for instance), the claims of people on society – now are seen as political. In a major social area such as education it is intellectual and moral evasion not to recognise this. It is quite right of the alternative press to force this issue on us. Moreover, theoretical positions often presuppose political ones. The criticism of R.S. Peters which is so widespread in the alternative press is as much criticism of his political assumptions as it is of his technical contribution to the philosophy of education.

The two principal political positions which are developed in the alternative press are the Marxist one and the libertarian one. Labels sit even more uneasily in this area than they do elsewhere. There are as many brands of Marxists as there are of libertarianism, and there are libertarian Marxists as well as Marxist libertarians; and there are many sociologists in the alternative movement who consider themselves both libertarian and Marxist. The division tends to fall differently with different issues. Thus, libertarians tend on the whole to be sympathetic to the deschooling movement, whereas Marxists criticise it as 'romantic' and leaving unaffected the problems resulting from the unequal distribution of power within our society. Again, libertarians tend to distrust *any* power structure, whereas Marxists seem to accept a power structure as inevitable and argue only about its control.

What is common to both positions is a willingness to move quickly from the particular to the general, from the individual instance to explanation in terms of system. If one is attempting to deal with a problem within the accepted frame of reference one tends to explain away difficulties as problems to do with individual performance; an inexperienced teacher, 'difficult' children, discipline, etc. Both libertarians and Marxists are likely to argue, on the other hand, that while you attempt to deal with the problems in terms of the existing frame of reference, the

difficulties are likely to continue. They are problems to do with the system, not with particular people. Marxists are likely to add that the problems are not ones which can be solved within the school, either. They have to be solved in society as a whole first. Libertarians would be less sure of this. Sustained by the examples of Tolstoy, A.S. Neill etc. they might argue that at any rate a start can be made at the local level. Hence the current libertarian interest in free schools, especially in examples of free schools operating successfully in practice.

One is tempted to the generalisation that the Marxist critique of education is interesting because of the challenge it offers to current educational theory, whereas the libertarian critique is interesting by virtue of its challenge to current educational practice. Such a generalisation has, however, to be resisted; and not least because it itself is an example of the way in which the frame of reference within which academic discussion tends to be conducted operates to relegate and devalue the tradition of libertarian thought. In fact, the libertarian challenge to educational practice is rooted in a set of philosophical premises as serious and coherent as Marxism itself. Both libertarianism and Marxism are theoretical critiques: their difference lies in the assumptions about man and society from which they start.

The fourth feature of the alternative press which emerges from an inspection of its reading lists is its international character. In the first place, many of the items on the lists are themselves of overseas origin. The short list given above (p. 6 ) includes three pieces by American writers and a fourth from Canada; and the proportion is usually higher than this. The circulation of alternative materials is to some extent international.

Secondly, the more extensive lists typically include a high proportion of references to books by American or European authors. Of course, any academic booklist today is likely to include a high proportion of works by American and other writers; but my point goes further than this. Because of the nature of the interests of the alternative press, whole subject

areas are dominated by writers from other countries. Very little work has been done in this country, for example, on deschooling. The relevant names here are Illich, Goodman, Freire and Everett Reimer. Similarly, not much writing has yet appeared in this country on women's liberation and sexism in education, though this is changing. At the moment this section of the alternative reading list is dominated by American and French writers. The same point can be made with respect to Black Liberation and racism. And if one defines subject areas differently, in terms of conceptual approaches rather than issues, the same applies. The extensive critical discussion of Marxism and Existentialism which has been going on in the past decade has been going on in countries other than Britain.

To some extent, then, one can see this internationalism of reference as a reaction against the narrowness of the British academic tradition. Denied access in their course to the insights afforded by the two principal philosophical traditions in the world today, students have gone elsewhere for information, notably to the alternative press. But one can also see this wide reference as a reflection of a genuine internationalism of interest. Among the politically-oriented of the alternative critics it takes the form of a keen interest in the affairs of Cuba, Chile, Viet Nam, or South Africa. In more specifically educational terms it takes the form of an interest in examples from overseas: in the lessons that can be drawn, for instance, from the 'Scuola and Quartiere' movement in Italy, from the efforts to implement Julius Nyerere's educational philosophy in Tanzania, or from the attempts at university reform in many countries which followed the campus revolts of 1968. The clearest example is, perhaps the importance of the Latin American experience of education for the writings of Ivan Illich and through him to the whole deschooling movement.

There is an obvious relationship between the internationalism of the alternative press and the internationalism of student culture. It is easy to see in the prominence afforded to such

subjects as Black Liberation, women's rights, and, more recently, children's rights, a reflection of student social concern and, in the formulation of that concern, of the immense influence of American student protest movements and the whole Civil Rights movement. I shall point to some specific instances of that influence later.

Clearly, this kind of international borrowing has its dangers. The experience of one culture is not always a good guide when it comes to the problems of another culture. It is not just that the styles needed to tackle problems successfully in the two cultures may be different: the problems themselves may be different. The problems faced by West Indian children in schools in London are not quite the same as those met by black children in schools in Massachusetts. But the wide reference of the alternative press has at least this advantage: it becomes hard to dismiss the press as parochial. The contrary is surely true. The alternative press gives expression to a wide variety of viewpoints, some of which are those of major European philosophical traditions taken for granted elsewhere but not commonly entertained in academic discussion in our country.

But it would be unfair, having raised the matter of the theoretical cast of much alternative writing, to let the matter rest there. Certainly, some of the publications, such as *Radical Philosophy*, are heavily, and abstractly, theoretical. The bulk of alternative publications, however, are organised not by discipline but by fields of action. *Humpty-Dumpty* is concerned with psychology applied; *Case-Con* with social work; and the majority of educational publications with education practised. One should remember the readership of the alternative press. The readers are often very close to the experience. The alternative critique of college or university education is read, and written, by those participating in the process, usually as learners; and the critique of schools by teachers, usually young teachers. In the case of the latter, a spur to reading the alternative press appears to be very often a sense of discrepancy between the facts of the practical

situation as they encounter it and the theoretical explanation of it which they received during their initial training. They find on the one hand that the educational psychology and sociology that they have learned is irrelevant, and on the other that the educational ideology they have imbibed invokes values which are denied by the system. In these circumstances some turn to the alternative press for a rationale which fits their experience more closely. This is all the more likely to be the case because they sense that the problems which confront them are often not ones which can be easily solved within the existing system. They are problems not of curriculum development but of the hidden curriculum.

Another way of putting this is to say that in a society such as ours, where we appear to be moving from a situation in which there is one dominant value system to a situation in which a plurality of value systems compete, problems of conflicting value systems are experienced, especially by young people, as practical, not theoretical, problems. This is especially true in education; and it raises questions about the kind of theoretical exposure students receive in colleges and universities. What they need is an opportunity to develop a rationale of their practice, i.e. a justification of action. But justification can be, has to be, in terms of values as well as in terms of 'theory'. It is this which is demanded in so many alternative publications, especially of the one-off, grass roots sort — *cris-de-coeur* from particular colleges or courses.

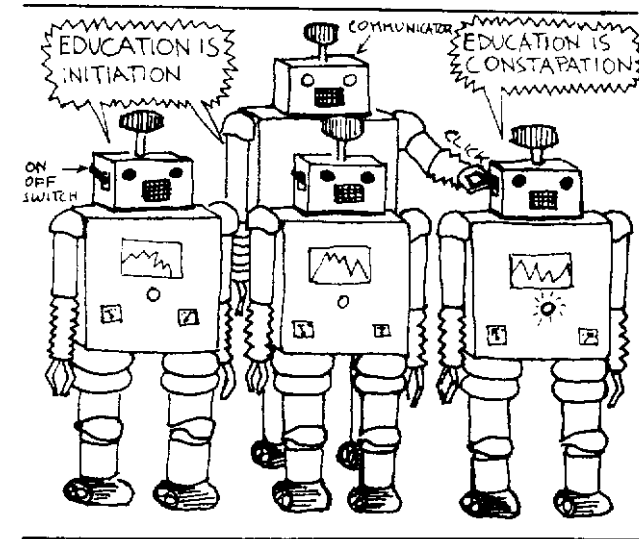
Paradoxically, this was less of a problem in the old, 'unreformed' colleges of the fifties, where academic theory was subordinated to the well-known child-centred (but certainly not student-centred) ideology of the training colleges. The reaction of the sixties against the 'undifferentiated mush' approach to educational studies increased the intellectual rigour of the training but at the expense of opening a gap between theory and practice. This had two effects: on the one hand it exposed theory to the charge of irrelevance; on the other it made the relation of action to values obscure. In fact, as the alternative

critics sharply point out, any theory of human behaviour rests on assumptions about human nature which have implications for values. Behaviourist theories of educational psychology, for example, make assumptions about people which many alternative critics find objectionable. Value schemes are there but they are implicit and unexamined. The consequence is that young teachers may find themselves committed in the classroom to practice which they gradually realise to be inconsistent with their own developing patterns of values and beliefs. The remedy, in the view of the alternative critics, is two-fold: first, the 'hidden' values of disciplines, institutions and training programmes should be exposed, so that the learner can choose to adopt them or not; secondly, the disciplines themselves need to become more existentially-oriented. They need to be developed, that is, in terms of the implications they have for life and action.

It needs to be recognised, finally, that the only possible procedure in such circumstances is to start from an assumption of the autonomy of the learner. A rationale for his actions is something that has to be developed by the individual himself. It is not something that can be given or imposed from outside. Such an assumption has, of course, considerable implications for the whole structure of educational relationships — but it is precisely at that point that the alternative critique begins.

The structure of this book is as follows: Chapters One and Two are general and explore some positions common to most alternative publications; Chapters Three and Four each discuss a particular publication (*Libertarian Education* and *Hard Cheese*), and Chapter Five examines the treatment of some issues prominent in the alternative press. Throughout I have quoted extensively in an effort to convey the flavour of particular publications.

## Chapter One



What is education? According to R.S. Peters, whose definition has become the established orthodoxy, it is initiation into worthwhile activities. According to the alternative critics it is nothing of the sort. In their view such a model of the educational process is totally unacceptable. It will take us at once to the heart of the alternative critique if we try to understand why.

The case against Peters is put especially cogently in that classic of the alternative press, *The Great Brain Robbery*, a 67-page pamphlet written and produced single-handed by Keith Paton in the four terms for which he was suspended by Keele. The first half of the pamphlet takes the form of a critical commentary on the ideas of R.S. Peters as they are expressed in his book *Ethics and Education*. (The book was chosen for attack, says Paton, because it was a compulsory item on his reading list at Keele — which tells us something, perhaps, about the nature of academic influence!) Starting from Peters's own discussion of educational models, Paton examines the implications of a number of models commonly put forward to describe the educational process.

The first two of these are what Paton calls the pottery-making model and the gardening model. The former is a version of that traditional account of the teaching process which sees the teacher's business as essentially one of formation, of moulding or shaping the pupil to fit a desired pattern. The latter, 'child-centred' education, Peters sees as largely a reaction against the former. It is the model which underlies much modern educational theory, particularly with respect to the infant school, and it places great emphasis on the child's capacity for self-realisation. The business of the teacher is, as it were, to co-operate with the child in its own growth, providing it with appropriate nourishment and with the right conditions. The child, according to this view of the educational process, is like a plant, and the teacher like a careful gardener.

Both Paton and Peters object to this account of education. In the first place, says Paton, the model creates a difference in kind between pupil and teacher which is fundamentally inegalitarian. Young gardeners can grow into old gardeners, but plants stay plants. Secondly, the model is misleadingly individualistic. Plants don't learn from each other, children do. Thirdly, plants are passive, children active.

The potter had his hands constantly controlling the clay.

Along came the horticulturalists and shouted 'Hands off!' This was an advance but the model is still inadequate.

Yes, the child should be 'left alone' in one sense. *But he or she will not let you alone*. He \*\*\*\*\* ? will talk with you, and when you can no longer help him he will move on. If you try to control him, even in subtle ways ('of course you enjoy washing dishes, Johnny') he will not be fooled. He will be sensitive to your insensitivity and has the right to remove himself from your company. The task of adults is not to have no influence on the child, as the 'hands off' cry suggests. It is rather to make sure that the child can escape any influence you may have on him if he wants to.

Something about Paton's own model of education emerges, of course, in this passage. The point to note at the moment, however, is the terms of his criticism of the 'child-centred' model. It is not sufficient to display a general benevolence towards the child and to orientate yourself to his interests, as you see them. The crucial thing is whether the child is able to reject your interpretation, to escape, if he so wishes, from your benevolence. It is this ability on the part of the pupil to reject that, in Paton's view, distinguishes the 'child-centred' model of education from the libertarian model. More generally, it is a fundamental weakness of most models of the educational process that they do not allow the learner sufficient initiative in this respect. This is particularly true of the next two models which Paton considers, the Behaviourist model of education and the model put forward by Peters himself.

Behaviourist assumptions underlie most contributions of the social sciences to educational theory. Many introductory text books in educational psychology, for instance, tend to define learning in terms of observable changes in behaviour and give little weight to the subjective reports of learners. Much of the evidence they cite comes from experiments with animals, where, of course, no subjective report is possible; and there is a

confident generalisation from the behaviour of animals to the behaviour of humans. The example Paton takes is Skinnerian psychology. Skinner's work on the importance of reinforcement in setting up patterns of behaviour relies almost exclusively on his extensive experimentation with rats and pigeons (hence the title of one underground magazine concerned with psychology: *Red Rat*; hence, too, Paton's labelling of Behaviourist models of education as *animal training* models). Running through all Skinner's work is the assumption that human learning is similar to, perhaps even the same as, animal learning; and he has no hesitation in applying his findings to the classroom and making recommendations about teaching.

Paton's first criticism of the Skinnerian model is that it again reduces learners to the sub-human level. In the earlier models considered it was clay and plants; now it is rats and pigeons. Furthermore, it is not even rats in their natural active state. It is rats confined in Skinnerian boxes from which they cannot escape. The principle of respect for the learner as an agent is rejected. The learner is someone/thing which the experimenter/teacher *shapes*.

This first point is a moral one. It is to do with equality and relationship. Paton's second point is a criticism of the Skinnerian model in its own terms, i.e. as an account of the learning process. As a theory of human learning it is deficient because it does not recognise that people have intentions and can act on the world in the light of those intentions. Two acts can be identical so far as their behavioural manifestation goes. So far as their meaning goes, however, they may be quite different. The example Paton gives is of the man standing guard while his mates are burgling a house. He sees a policeman approaching and gives a cough. To the policeman it is just a cough. To his mates inside it is a warning.

In the terms which Paton borrows (significantly, from Continental philosophy), one is an example of *process*, the other of *praxis*. The distinction is important, and a familiar one in the underground press, so it will be as well to establish clearly what is meant. There are two ways of explaining things. One is to

explain them in terms of impersonal, 'external' causes. This is the traditional scientific way. The other is to explain them in terms of purposes. The former, description in terms of *process*, developed as a convenient way of describing the activity of things (things cannot have a purpose). The latter, description in terms of *praxis*, developed as a way of describing the type of activity characteristic of agents, i.e. projects or communications having meaning. A piece of praxis is definable only in relation to what it is intended to achieve. It is the meaning which you, the actor, have when you are doing something, the meaning with which you, as a private person, invest the world about you. A cough, then, can either be an example of process (he had a tickle in his throat) or an example of praxis (he meant it as a warning). What is important is that one should not confuse the two.

But this is precisely what Paton accuses the Behaviourists of doing. By treating all behaviour as process and denying the very possibility of praxis they reduce learners to the status of things. Learners aren't things; and any theory which does not take into account the feature which distinguishes people from things, the human capacity for meaningful action, can provide only a limited guide to human learning.

Which brings us to Peters's own model of the educational process. Many alternative critics have taken issue with Peters over his conception of education and later we shall consider some of their arguments in detail. We shall look particularly at the relation between Peters's thinking and what the underground refers to as consensus thinking; and we shall examine much more closely his view of the nature of knowledge. Paton's own criticism of Peters, however, puts the main underground objection in a nutshell. The objection stems essentially from Peters's revealing use of the word 'initiation' to describe what he regards as the function of the teacher. Implicit in the metaphor are preconceptions about the respective roles of the teacher and the learner. Paton describes Peters's model of education as that of the priest initiating the uninitiated into special knowledge, and

that is not an unfair description of how the metaphor works itself out in Peters's writing. The objection to the metaphor is, of course, that it preserves the gulf between teacher and learner that was noted earlier. Between super-human and human there is the same gap as there is between potter and clay and between gardener and plant, trainer and animal. Fundamentally, the model is hierarchical. The knowledge the priest has access to is special knowledge, knowledge revealed to the chosen, not something available. And so the priest is in a special position with respect to the uninitiated learner. He defines the situation. He it is who defines what is acceptable in terms of knowledge, behaviour, values; he even decides *who* is acceptable. As we shall see, this is important to the alternative critics. Who defines the situation controls the situation. It is through definition that the most subtle forms of social control are exercised — all the more subtle because the definers, in this case the teachers, do not know that they are defining and controlling. We shall see later some of the ways in which this occurs. The point Paton makes about the Peters model is not just that this occurs, but that it is of the essence of the model that this should occur. It is a kind of intellectual Behaviourism. For all the apparent differences it is not so unlike the animal training model.

The only model which, in Paton's view, is not open to the charge of an inherent antiegalitarian bias is one which conceives of the educational process as a kind of dialogue. A dialogue must (logically) be between two persons. The concept recognises from the outset both parties to the human exchange which is part at least of what we mean by education. Certainly, older persons may have more to contribute to such an exchange than younger ones. But it is the terms on which they offer such a contribution that is changed by the concept of dialogue. The learner becomes a person, too. He can make his own contribution to the exchange. He has certain rights: the right to disagree, to reserve judgement, to go elsewhere for information if need be. His activity is assumed. (This, too, is a logical matter. 'Learning', if you like,

is a 'doing' word. Moreover, it is something that only learners can do. Teachers cannot do it for them.) He is forever building and modifying intellectual structures. Some of these are of interest to teachers. Others aren't. But whether they are 'relevant' (again, a matter for definition) or not, they must be taken into account. Children bring their home and neighbourhood cultures into the classroom with them. Rats don't. Perhaps they would if they could. It's just that shut up in Skinnerian boxes they don't have much chance to. Rat culture, one might say, is systematically discounted by the animal training model. Just as, of course, neighbourhood culture is sometimes discounted by the school.

It is the weakening of this possibility of discounting that is the essence of the Paton model. A dialogue is hardly a dialogue if the exchange is not a genuine one. A precondition, almost, of dialogue is recognition of the praxis of the other.

Now it would be very easy to dismiss all this as impracticable, especially with references to the classroom. But one should take care. First, 'impracticable' is one of those discount words commonly used to deny other people's praxis. To say a thing is impracticable is an easy way to dismiss a point of view without examining it. It is the way conventional wisdom often operates. But, of course, it is precisely conventional wisdom that is at issue here. If the discussion is to be conducted only on its terms, on ground of its choosing, the argument will never get started. Who defines the situation controls the situation. The battle is lost before it is joined. Before accepting the epithet, the alternative critics will want to know the grounds of the judgement, the evidence cited, the criteria used, the identity of the judgers (all headmasters?), and, above all, the nature of the assumptions made.

One assumption, for instance, might be 'in present circumstances', i.e. given the present organisation of schools, the present attitudes of teachers, of society. Given this assumption, the alternative critics would probably not dispute the conclusion. But

the alternative critics do not take this assumption as given. In their view present circumstances *do* need changing. The question rather is *where* they need changing, *why* they need changing, what they need to be changed to.

Another assumption which is nearly always made when educational models are discussed is that their principal reference is to the classroom.

There are a number of important points to be made about this assumption: and the first two are to do with the associated assumption that the learner is a child.

In the first place, as a matter of fact, in our educational system there are many learners who are not children. In 1972/3 there were 3,800,000 students in further education, including (and why not?) those on day release and those in evening classes. Ought not any educational models developed be equally applicable to these?

The point is not a trivial one. A great deal of strain is being felt in higher education all over the world at the moment and much of it centres on the relationship between teachers and learners. Part at least of this strain arises, in the view of the alternative critics, because the wrong models of the educational process are being adopted. Models of education developed with reference to the primary school (or the grammar school in the case of Peters?) are being too readily transferred to the university and colleges.

One obvious deduction is that it is an error to talk of one universal educational model applicable to all situations. It might be more sense to think in terms of a variety of models, one being applicable, say, to the primary school, another to the university, another to the college of further education, and so on. And this might indeed be useful so far as practice is concerned. Yet in my reading of the alternative press I have found few suggestions to this effect. To go further: one senses an unease among the alternative critics whenever the question of differentiation is approached. The reason for this is that models of education are to do with

relationships between people, i.e. they are ultimately questions not of practice but of morality. Our culture today seems highly sensitive to discrimination between people, and what the alternative critics fear is that by accepting a variety of models of educational relationships, one may be opening the door to unacceptable forms of discrimination.

There is an important practical dimension to this today. One of the key discriminations in this area is between child and adult. And it is precisely this discrimination that is becoming very blurred in our society. There is, of course, no clear biological point at which one stops being a child and becomes an adult. Whether one is seen as a child or an adult is a matter of social definition. Social definitions can vary: and what seems to be happening at the present time is that the definition of childhood in our society is being drastically revised. The pressure towards change is being felt in two areas especially: we are being forced to alter our conceptions first of the duration of childhood and second, of the status of childhood. The duration of childhood is becoming increasingly open to question. On the one hand recognition as an adult is in some respects coming earlier: the age at which one is entitled to vote has been lowered from twenty-one to eighteen. On the other hand entry to full adult status is being increasingly delayed: the school-leaving age has been raised, and more and more people stay on to complete a course, or courses, in higher education. The natural consequence of these changes has been to put the accepted definitions of children's status under pressure. Is it possible, for instance, to treat fifteen- to sixteen-year-olds exactly in the way you treat younger 'children'? And what about students? It is a frequent complaint in the alternative press that at college or university students find themselves treated 'as children': even post-graduate students complain on this score.

These cases, it may be felt, are borderline (although the numbers concerned are not small) and therefore do not really affect the heart of accepted definitions of childhood. To take this point of view is to miss the full force of the alternative



criticism. There is now a substantial body of alternative writing challenging current conceptions about the status of the child. The challenge comes in particular over such questions as what is due to the child as a child, what are the limits of the advantage which may be taken of a child, what are the child's rights — vis-a-vis parents, teachers, society — what ought we to expect of children? We shall discuss later the views of alternative critics on some of these issues. At the moment it is sufficient to note the uncertainty of the alternative critics about the status of the child and, consequently their reluctance to commit themselves to models of education which take for granted extant and unexamined notions of the learner.

A third doubt which alternative critics have when education is discussed chiefly with reference to the classroom arises from their suspicion of any theory which identifies learning with a particular institution or geographical location. There is a widespread distrust of institutions among the alternative critics. If you are a socialist you distrust existing institutions because they are bourgeois and hierarchical; if you are an anarchist you probably distrust institutions anyway. One of the most conspicuous features of the alternative press is its concern for the effect that institutions have on people. And perhaps one of its most valuable functions is its readiness to draw attention to particular instances of those effects. There are numerous articles, for example, on the treatment of the mentally handicapped.

In terms of education this distrust of institutions shows itself typically in an interest in learning which goes on outside the classroom. There is an interest, for example, in Ivan Illich's learning networks, in free schools, and in all the incidental learning which is part of everyday life.

To be educated well or badly, to learn by a long process how to cope with the physical environment and the culture of one's society, is part of the human condition. In every society the education of the children is of the first importance. But in all

societies both primitive and highly civilised, until quite recently, most education of most children has occurred incidentally. Adults do their work and other social tasks; children are not excluded, are paid attention to, and learn to be included.

The children are not 'taught'. In many adult institutions incidental education is taken for granted as part of the function: families and age-statuses, community labour, master-apprentice arrangements, games and plays, prostitution and other sexual initiation, religious rites and churches. In Greek *paideia* the entire network of institutions, the polis, was thought of as importantly an educator.

Generally speaking this incidental process suits the nature of learning better than direct teaching. The young see real causes and effects rather than pedagogic exercises. Reality is often complex, but the young can take it by their own handle, at their own times, according to their own interests and initiative. Most important, they can initiate, identify, be approved or disapproved, cooperate and compete without the anxiety of being the centre of attention; there is socialisation with less fear, or submission.

The passage is by Paul Goodman, who has had a seminal influence on alternative thinking, and it is quoted by Paton from an article by Goodman in *Anarchy* No. 107, January 1970. Not all alternative writers share Goodman's views on the relative importance of incidental learning. The school, they say, in practice is where the battle has to be fought. Nevertheless, nearly all alternative critics would agree that any account of the learning process, any model of learning, should include such forms of learning within its scope.

The only model which does this at all satisfactorily is that which sees education as a form of dialogue. The model recognises both parties to the exchange and does not draw a hierarchical distinction between them. It presumes the power of initiative on

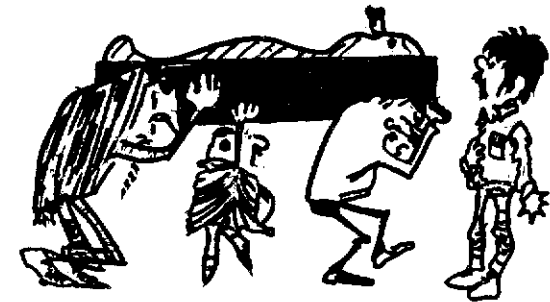
both sides and rules out the propriety of one party imposing its views on the other. The model is egalitarian – and this is the crucial shift – in a way that the other models considered are not.

There is, for example, an important difference between it and the ‘child-centred’ model in this respect. Both are similar in that they ascribe importance to the child. The difference is that the ‘child-centred’ approach is one-way oriented whereas the ‘dialogue’ approach can never be anything but two-way. Dialogue is two-centred. The existence, and interest, of the teacher is recognised as well as that of the learner. In this the ‘dialogue’ model is essentially more realistic, and honest, than the ‘child-centred’ model, which theoretically discounts the teacher but so often in practice involves manipulation of the child to accord with the teacher’s view of the child’s interests.

Paton is firmly in the libertarian camp. The libertarian movement is only one of many which find expression in the alternative press, and many alternative writers would find much to disagree with in *The Great Brain Robbery*. But if there is anything on which they would agree, anything they have in common, it is this ultimate reference of everything to egalitarian criteria.

At the heart, then, of the alternative critique of Peters is a crucial change of reference, a move from a conception of education which is essentially hierarchic, however liberal, to one which is essentially egalitarian.

## Chapter Two



The aim of education is to pass on the body of knowledge.

No doubt a more egalitarian relationship between teacher and taught is important in education, especially higher education: but is that all there is to education? Doesn't knowledge come in to it somewhere? Peters's definition was, after all, initiation into worthwhile activities, and although one might object to the hierarchical implications of 'initiation', surely everyone would accept his 'worthwhile activities'. We go to school, or college, to learn *something*.

Unfortunately, it is not quite as simple as that. Many alternative writers, though not all, would accept the importance of the cognitive side of education. ('I'm not a Black Paper elitist who wants to keep working class kids down by keeping them away from knowledge,' Paton) What they would definitely not accept, however, is Peters's view of what is meant by 'worthwhile'. This is not just a matter of difference over the scope of the word, of disagreement over what activities are to be counted as worthwhile. The concept itself, in the view of the alternative critics, begs a host of questions.

What sort of activities count as worthwhile in our society? Who decides what is to count as worthwhile? On what grounds is a thing said to be worthwhile? Is there substantial agreement in our society about what things are worthwhile? What happens if there is disagreement? These are the questions which alternative critics raise. They are important questions: and underlying them are more important questions still – questions about the nature of knowledge and, ultimately, the nature of man.

Let us, then, take a closer look at Peters's 'worthwhile activities', this time using as our guide David Adelstein's *The Philosophy of Education or The Wisdom and Wit of R.S. Peters*, first printed as an occasional publication of the Students Union of the London University Institute of Education, and still to be found in alternative bookshops in that form, re-published more recently as a chapter in *Counter Course*. Adelstein's approach owes much to that of Ernest Gellner, whose *Words and Things*, a very critical analysis of the Linguistic Analysis school of philosophy, a school of which Peters is a representative, was published in 1968. What Adelstein does is to apply Gellner's approach specifically to the field of the philosophy of education. He pays particular attention to the philosophical and social premises which Peters brings to his theory of education.

Adelstein points out that Peters's theory is derived from a particular view of the nature of society. According to Peters,

human action is basically purposive and these purposes are 'irreducible': i.e. you can't go behind them and relate them to yet other values. Since actions and institutions are justified in terms of purpose, and since purpose is, as it were, embodied in actions and institutions, the rationale of actions and institutions is found by inspection. Thus, if one wants to find out why some subjects are included in the curriculum and some are not, one looks at the existing curriculum and, so to speak, elicits the reasons. One does this primarily by applying a particular kind of scrutiny to the language associated with different subjects. One finds, for example, that science, history, mathematics etc. have phrases like 'far ranging cognitive content', 'progressive development' and 'intellectual satisfaction' associated with them, while games, say, do not. The presence of such associations indicate an activity's claim to be 'worthwhile'.

There are several points to be made.

First, almost without anyone noticing, considerable significance is assigned to the role of the philosopher. If there is doubt as to whether a thing is 'worthwhile' or not, then crucial evidence is provided by a particular kind of scrutiny of language. It is the task of philosophy to provide that scrutiny. In certain circumstances, therefore, the philosopher could be placed in the position of arbiter. In principle, he might be called on to determine whether a thing was 'worthwhile' or not. In practice, it might be thought, such a situation would never arise: but in fact something very like it does arise in certain educational contexts. An example is given later in this chapter. When this sort of thing happens, the alternative critics are inclined to question both the practice *and* the principle.

The philosopher might well object, however, that his function was not to arbitrate but to elucidate. The issue, when the philosopher comes to it, is already decided. Whether a thing is worthwhile or not is determined by inspection of existing practice. Society has already decided what things count as 'worthwhile' and the results of its decisions are embodied in its

institutions. The philosopher's role is merely to expose the rationale latent in the institutions.

This brings us to the second point which alternative critics make. If this is indeed an accurate statement of the philosopher's position, then it is rather an extraordinary one. For it makes the philosopher little more than an apologist for the status quo. Since this seems in fact to be Peters's position, some explanation is called for.

According to Peters, social reality resides in the 'impersonal content and procedures which are enshrined in public traditions'. The value of education lies in the fact that it initiates the pupil into 'public modes of experience' which encapsulate these traditions. The two chief carriers of the public mode of experience are language (hence the philosopher's professional interest in it) and 'the forms of knowledge'.

According to P.H. Hirst, a colleague of Peters, the forms of knowledge are 'the basic articulations whereby the whole of experience has become intelligible to man, they are the fundamental achievement of mind'. Hirst shows that there are seven 'logically distinct' forms of knowledge, corresponding roughly to such subject disciplines as history, mathematics and the sciences. 'By coincidence', comments Adelstein tartly, 'these seven different forms of knowledge constitute, more or less, a typical grammar-school curriculum. No doubt the grammar-school curriculum embodies most of the public traditions'.

It is because Peters has such an exalted view of what is transmitted in the process of education that he takes the position he does. Through the forms of knowledge a pupil or student gains access to 'the fundamental achievement of mind'. 'The whole of experience' is made intelligible to him. Ultimately, education is the acquainting of the learner with civilisation.

Now there is obviously some sense in all this. It is only by building up one's knowledge of the approaches, procedures and concepts of, say, physics that one becomes able ultimately to appreciate and perhaps contribute to the development of modern

physical theory. It is a long process and perhaps best carried out in the structured settings of educational institutions. What is wrong with the view is what it leads to.

It leads in the first place to a depreciation of the learner. On the one hand we have Civilisation: on the other the pining learner. The child or student is, in Peters's unfortunate phrase, in 'the position of the barbarian outside the gates'.

It leads in the second place to an exaltation of the teacher. Who will let the barbarian in? 'Civilised men do not grow up overnight like mushrooms; they become civilised by being brought up by others who are civilised . . .' (Peters and Hirst, *The Logics of Education*, 1970, p. 115).

Conspicuous among these civilised men are, of course, teachers.

Now the teacher, having himself been initiated, is on the inside of these activities and modes of thought and conduct. He understands vividly, perhaps, that some created objects are beautiful and others are not; he can recognise the elegance of a proof or a paragraph, the cogency of an argument, the clarity of an exposition, the wit of a remark, the neatness of a plot and the justice and wisdom of a decision. He has perhaps a love of truth, a passion for justice and a hatred of what is tasteless. (Peters, *Education as Initiation*, 1964, p. 42).

Hands up, says Adelstein, all those who can remember that sort of teacher from their schooldays! Given that sort of fantasy or, as the alternative writers would often prefer to put it, that kind of mystification, it is not surprising that Peters should speak of teachers as priests and assign them the cultural authority and role that he does in such passages as the following:

When there is no unified ideal that can be handed on by the priests, who else is there to stand between the generations and to initiate others into the various aspects of a culture

within which the individual has eventually to determine where he stands? If teachers are not thought of as, to varying degrees, authorities on this culture how effective are they likely to be in a society in which most of the pressures on young people are not in the direction of education?

Tell that to the sociology students of Essex!

Underlying these views of Peters is a particular conception of the nature of social knowledge. Social knowledge is something located outside the individual. It is not something that a person begins to share as soon as he is born, a tradition in which he participates, which lives only in so far as the individuals constituting society actively reproduce it: but it is something which can be deferred, into which a person has to be initiated, a city which a person isn't born in but which he has to stay outside the gates of until someone lets him in. In another of the words of which alternative critics are fond, tradition is 'reified', made a thing of.

One of the consequences of this view of knowledge is, of course, to devalue the social knowledge a person *is* born into, or at least acquires in the ordinary business of living: that is to say, the culture of family and neighbourhood, of society outside the classroom. But even within the classroom the conception is inadequate. It represents knowledge as 'out there', something objective, which we can all inspect and agree upon. But knowledge is not like that at all. It is more like a process than a product. We arrive at knowledge by constructing hypotheses and theories, trying them out, subjecting them to criticism, revising them, rejecting them, replacing them. Knowledge is not something you agree about but something you *disagree* about. It advances not by addition but by revision. A theory is found wanting and is replaced by another. That, too, is found wanting and so the process goes on. Moreover, the theories advanced are partial ways of seeing. They are inherently subjective. They start from different premises and often reflect different personalities. And so one

can get several theories competing in the same field at the same time. This is especially true of the social sciences, of course: but recent writers such as Kuhn have suggested that the same is true of the sciences. How typical, and how complete, a picture of the way in which scientific knowledge advances this is remains open to debate. What is certain, however, is that it is being debated. The whole question of the nature of knowledge, and the nature of the concepts and procedures in different fields, is very much at issue at the moment. So when Peters remarks 'Surely one of the great achievements of our civilisation is to have gradually separated out and got clearer about the types of concepts and truth-criteria involved in different forms of thought' one is a little surprised. David Adelstein remarks 'Only a "philosopher" oblivious of the many sectarian debates in the epistemology of science, mathematics, history, psychology and sociology could say something as dumb as this'.

Such a view of knowledge is particularly unfortunate in the context of the classroom. There, if anywhere, the emphasis should be on the active aspect of knowledge, on the ways in which hypotheses are formed, tried out, discarded and revised. In the field of higher education such a view seems to have no place at all. The objective must surely be to develop a critical approach to knowledge, a sense of its relativity and provisionality, a capacity to weigh the merits of rival theories and perhaps generate new ones. And even if, as many writers in the alternative press suggest, that objective is all too seldom achieved in present undergraduate courses, the student's experience alone is sufficient to contradict the view of knowledge as a unitary, agreed corpus. To the student a given field of knowledge often resembles a battle ground in which different explanations compete for superiority. If one moves out of the lecture room and asks what *Antistudent* calls 'The Big Questions' about politics and society and human nature, the resemblance is even more marked. The present period seems to be one in which there is very sharp social divergence over many public issues: and any thinking

person seeking to establish their own position is more likely to be struck by the lack of social agreement than by evidence of common adherence to Peters's public traditions. Peters's whole account of knowledge seems, in the light of such experience, quite unreal.

It is, perhaps, as well to make it clear at this point that the quarrel of the underground is not with Peters as a person. 'It is important to realise,' says Paton, 'that Peters is *not* a reactionary but a semi-liberal, semi-progressive, semi-technocrat-equalitarian, semi-conservative elitist! In other words — a typical example of the current educational consensus . . .'

'We must note', says Adelstein, 'the relationship of Peters's type of thought to the English social structure. As the English ruling class is not the product of a thoroughgoing bourgeois revolution, it has never been called upon to articulate its bourgeois principles clearly . . . Its intelligentsia never developed any refined social theory. Instead, it has relied in practice upon a pragmatic conservatism, never venturing to generalise, always yielding at weak moments and repressing severely when strong. Its mode of arguing is traditionally eclectic — no trade unionist or student negotiator can have avoided the problem of the filibuster of examples when bargaining with the bosses or authorities. Peters's style of thought is an exact replica of the customary mode of response of the English ruling class to a challenge from below.'

It is because Peters is, so far as education is concerned, the spokesman of the social consensus which governs English thought that he has drawn the fire of alternative critics.

Perhaps a better way of putting it is to say that Peters is the spokesman of the *assumption* of social consensus that governs English thought. We have seen that Peters analyses a concept, for example the concept of curriculum content, by referring to 'ordinary' language, to the language associated with the concept in particular contexts. What the concept *is* is worked out first by

focussing on what it might normally be thought to be and then by a process of refining the meaning through a series of contrasts with what it is not. There is an assumption that all concepts are shared and correct. That people ('dare we say, social classes', says Adelstein) might have different, unshared usages and meanings, 'seems never to have occurred to our analysts'. The vital question of *whose* 'normal' usage of a concept is being suggested, and of whether this usage corresponds to reality, is never put. Adelstein goes on to argue that 'this assumption, never validated, of shared usage and experience, of basic consensus, constitutes the core of the ideology of the new philosophy and generates its basic power to confuse, its 'usage' in blurring real conflicts.'

The blurring of conflict is highly characteristic of the whole approach. When contradiction is pointed out the philosopher argues that different concepts are being used and that the contradiction is due to this. His typical strategy is to refer the concepts to their contexts — he might say, for example, that Adelstein uses the word 'philosophy' within a context of Marxism, whereas Peters uses it in the sense common to the Linguistic Analysis school of philosophy — and to say that since the contexts differ, and since meaning is to some extent a function of context, the disputants are not talking about the same thing. The contradiction is more apparent than real and has its roots in terminological confusion. Moreover, the dispute could be resolved by referring the usage of the concepts to 'normal' usage, in which case it would soon become apparent that, say, Adelstein's usage was a special one, that he was not using the word 'philosophy' in the 'normal' sense and that therefore his argument, though valid, no doubt, in its own terms, did not 'really' apply.

In this way the language used to describe any real situation of conflict can be manipulated to make the conflict seem imaginary, says Adelstein. 'And should our victim be trying to say something new, something which the philosopher might not already understand, should the victim offer concepts which are



TELL ME MORE  
ABOUT YOUR  
DELUSION OF  
BEING TRAPPED  
IN A CAGE!

not to be found in ordinary usage they will immediately be reduced to the philosopher's already given concepts. The technique automatically pre-empts any new knowledge and theories about society . . .

At this point an example is, perhaps, opportune. It is taken from an article by Ted Bowden in *Hard Cheese* (No. 1). Bowden is looking at the way in which the knowledge made available to students on a particular course in a college of education is subjected to a process of selection and management. He takes as an example the 'Theory and Practice of Education' component of the B. Ed. degree, part two, for internal students of the University of London, as taught in a particular session at Goldsmiths'. The 'Theory and Practice of Education' component is, apparently, structured in such a way that for each topic discussed one is expected to use three approaches — philosophical, psychological and sociological. The intention appears to be to achieve interdisciplinarity: in practice, according to Bowden, one has an approach in which one is expected to define problems from a philosophical perspective before examining what is taken to be relevant psychological and sociological evidence. Bowden's argument is that this process of selection gives rise to a covert 'management' of knowledge which restricts the kinds of psychological and sociological evidence made available, eliminating perspectives which might clash with the dominant perspective,

and which reinforces a particular educational ideology which is expressed chiefly through the philosophical approach adopted.

The process is illustrated by the treatment of one topic, motivation, in the Goldsmiths' course. The topic was introduced through a symposium of three speakers: a philosopher, a psychologist, and a sociologist. The philosopher acted as chairman and introduced the discussion. He did this through the consideration of a specific work, Passmore's *Perfectibility of Man*. Passmore sets out three types of life: 'toil', 'play' and 'care'. 'Care' is seen as enjoyment in achievements involved in civilised pursuits — a concept which, as Bowden points out, fits particularly closely with the view of education as 'initiation' into 'worthwhile' activities. The notion of 'care' was, in fact, given prominence. The philosopher then asked his questions: of the sociologist, was this a picture that picked out important aspects of the contemporary scene? and the psychologist, were these types of motivation of importance in learning? The discussion then proceeded within these guidelines.

What, asks Bowden, is the basis of the philosopher's assumptions about which psychological and sociological perspectives



NOW TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DELUSION  
THAT I'M NOT TRAPPED IN A CAGE.

were relevant? The point is that it was only these perspectives that the student met in the context. So far as they were concerned, the knowledge made available to them was controlled to that tolerated by one perspective, the perspective of, in Bowden's view, the dominant liberal educational ideology. This is especially unfortunate, Bowden points out, when there is a significant divergence between that perspective and the perspectives of important groups of psychologists and sociologists — a situation very likely to be the case when issues such as motivation are discussed. Newer perspectives are, of course, particularly likely to be defined out of the situation. Bowden observes,

Perhaps one of the reasons why the newer perspectives in psychology and sociology may be defined away as being, in a sense, irrelevant, is because of the different 'philosophical' view of man that they hold in contradistinction to the liberal philosophers of education. Liberal educational philosophy views man as 'passive' whilst much of the 'newer' psychology and sociology views man as 'active'. The notion of initiation would seem to imply a certain amount of manipulation of man in order that he may come to value what is taken as worthwhile — thus being able to enjoy 'civilised pursuits'.

New concepts are thus 'reduced to the philosopher's already given concepts'. Potentially disruptive insights are defused and assimilated to the patterns of the status quo: and the student learner is denied access to knowledge which might make him question too fundamentally the values and practice of our society.

Once again, the criticism must not be applied too narrowly. The issue is not so much Peters himself, or philosophy itself, as the style of English culture. Adelstein believes that 'Peters's style of thought is an exact replica of the customary mode of response of the English ruling class to a challenge from below'. When a challenge comes, say the challenge of Scottish or Welsh nationalism, there is the same translation of the dispute into the

terms of the status quo ('devolution', not 'independence' or 'self-government'), the same confident invoking of consensus ('most (Scottish) people are not *really* in favour of separatism'), the same blind conviction of shared assumptions ('would the Highlands *really* prefer to be governed by Glasgow rather than by London?' — note the unconscious condescension: those yobbos in Glasgow) and the same unexamined discounting of discrepant perspectives.

But 'consensus—thinking' is not just confined to 'the English ruling class' and the media: it is something which we all practise. We all tend to discount the outsider and the unexpected in the name of the familiar and the customary. If challenged, over, say, our concepts of childhood, we tend to invoke some vague consensus—principle, 'Everyone knows . . .', as if it were a law of nature. And if the anthropologist points out that the law does not apply in other societies, and the historian reminds us that the law did not apply in our own society in the past, we are not very bothered. It is a fact of nature now, a thing we take for granted, one of those fundamental assumptions we all share.

But, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, it seems to be becoming increasingly difficult in our society to find assumptions which we all share. How generally held are Conservative Party notions about wealth and Labour Party notions about state ownership? Over concepts of wealth, of property, of work, of freedom, of security there is surely considerable social divergence. Even over less obviously political issues, such as the role of women and the status of children, there is surely growing dispute.

The alternative press, reflecting as it does many minority viewpoints, is very sensitive to the implications of consensus—thinking. One area which has particularly attracted its attention in this respect is the social services. Alternative writers have been quick to point out that consensus-thinking enters deeply into the procedures and outlook of many of the people working in this area. It would not be to the point of the present discussion to enter into details, although we shall look at some examples



relevant to education later; but it will, perhaps, serve to bring out how deeply consensus-thinking has become part of our whole mental approach if I quote from an underground discussion of the kind of language associated with training for social work. The passage is taken from 'A Critique of Social Work Education in Newcastle', a paper produced by North East Case-Con Social Work Education Group for a forum on Social Work Education, and afterwards distributed through the alternative network.

The language of the courses is crucial here. For a start, it is about consensus and shared assumptions: we know what we know what we know. We can't *define* a word like 'disturbance', for instance, but we can talk about and thus give it life, like some semantic Frankenstein. Many of the terms used are about the smooth running of the system — 'integration', 'acceptance', etc. . . . The language used tends to indicate that what is *difficult* is *problematical*.

Many of the terms used are spurious claims to science — usually medical science. 'Diagnosis' and 'treatment' are obvious examples . . .

There is a darker side to this — the language bespeaks control in the time-honoured style of those attempting to veil their authoritarian stance with euphemisms i.e. 'a structural environment' = borstal, 'reality-testing' = ability to accept the impossible . . . [Social workers] learn, of course, to talk about the objects of their attention as 'clients'. This word alone perhaps sums up the issue of control. There is an attempt to create a world of clients, not *customers*, since, as Jon Davies has said:

'the customer is always right: he can choose, criticise and reject', whilst the client on the other hand gives up these privileges and accepts the superior judgement of the professional.

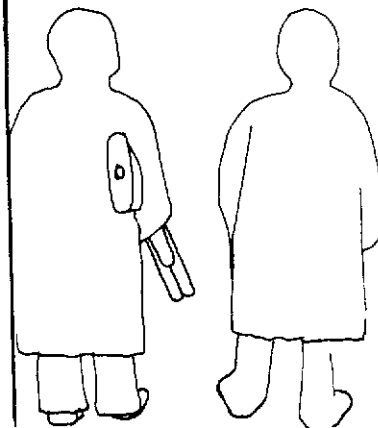
In education the implications of consensus-thinking are just as

significant. Rejection of the consensus is at the core of the alternative critique. In the pages that follow, when we shall be analysing particular alternative publications, we shall look at some of its criticisms in detail. But the general point should not be missed. From its relationship to the consensus alternative thinking derives its orientation, its identity, its *raison-d'être* — and its importance. For the crucial thing about the consensus is that it is breaking up.

## Chapter Three

All this freedom hasn't presented me  
with any discipline problems.

X



In this chapter I want to consider a current of thought which has never been assimilable to the social consensus, that is, the anarchic or libertarian tradition of thinking about education. One says tradition: it is important to realise that libertarian challenges to existing practice and theory are not just features of the present time. There is a long, deeply-considered tradition of thought behind them, a tradition as valid as that of any of the other rationales of education current in our society. Later in this

chapter I shall indicate some of the contributors to this tradition and try to place them in some sort of intellectual perspective. But to establish the nature of the libertarian challenge today we shall look in some detail at what is now becoming one of the longest-lived alternative periodicals in the field of education: *Libertarian Education*.

*Libertarian Education* is edited and produced by a small group of people (a collective) based principally at Leicester. Recently, in an attempt to involve more people, the group has taken to holding open editorial meetings in various parts of the country which anyone may attend. This editorial style is in many ways characteristic of the alternative press. There is a deliberate effort to move away from a managerial, directive style of editorship towards a more democratic, more relaxed approach. The periodical is printed by a small community press at Manchester and sold through the usual alternative bookshops. It comes out quarterly, roughly, and has continued for nearly four years now. It nearly always includes both original articles and articles reprinted from other publications, so that its pages provide a useful cross-section of the libertarian position. What exactly is that position?

A thoughtful article by Arthur Humphrey in the ninth number of *Libertarian Teacher* (which afterwards became *Libertarian Education*) sets out the position as it appears to one man at least.

Our attitude to education, says Humphrey, inevitably reflects our attitude to society as a whole. If we see education as viable within the present context, subject to the implementation of various reforms, that is probably because we see no fundamental objection to the way society is organised, none that could not be met by a few reforms. Libertarians, however, have profound objections to the way society is organised at present. In particular, they seek to 'replace the mystifying, authoritarian, manipulative society with one based on free uncoercive intercourse between people, in which individuals and groups each play full and equal part in decisions affecting the nature and quality of their lives'. Libertarians are not so stupid, says Humphrey, as

to believe that this transformation will be achieved in education while the rest of society remains unaltered: but 'we would also wish to emphasise that there will be no libertarian revolution in society unless and until our education system is liberated'.

Libertarianism in education defines itself in terms of its opposition to authoritarian concepts of education; and it is opposition to authoritarianism of all sorts:

The educator who sees himself as the possessor of superior knowledge or skills which he 'passes on' to more or less willing disciples, whether this is in the name of a liberal/democratic outlook or a socialist/revolutionary analysis is part of an authoritarian, or at best paternalistic, culture. (*Libertarian Teacher* 9, p. 16)

One can see at once what it is that relates the libertarian movement to the other egalitarian movements that are being felt at the present time. And one can also see what it is that marks the libertarian movement off from some of these other movements. To the Left, institutions are oppressive because they are an expression of bourgeois or capitalist ideology: to the libertarians institutions are oppressive because they reflect a hierarchic organisation of society, and they are inclined to believe that such an organisation would persist even in a post-revolutionary, fully socialist society. It follows that the model of the educational process favoured by the libertarians takes the form of the 'dialogue' model discussed in the first chapter. 'The libertarian will see education as a sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences . . .'

The relationship between the libertarian 'educator' and 'student' will be a free, cooperative and increasingly ambiguous relationship based on the mutual investigation of problems (which does *not* mean the student finding answers to the teachers' questions). The essential element in this relationship is the open, whole-hearted respect which must exist between

those involved and especial care must be taken where young children are concerned that their natural trust is not abused, however well-meaningly, by those in the position of teacher. However clever the latter might be the fact remains that he can only help his students to liberate themselves if he finds it possible to enter into a genuine dialogue with them, accepting their ideas and feelings as real and meaningful, however 'mistaken', examining and discussing such ideas and feelings rather than 'correcting' them. (*Libertarian Teacher* 9, p. 16).

The 'dialogue' model of education is favoured not just because of its egalitarianism. For libertarians egalitarianism is itself part of a more significant cluster of values, values to do with freedom. The aim of the teacher is to 'help his students to liberate themselves', which he does by assisting them to recognise 'the participants' place in society and the nature of the forces acting upon them'. But this can only be assistance: in the end one has to liberate oneself. 'We have no faith', says Humphrey — and the target is obvious — 'in the ability of a Vanguard group or party taking over power on our behalf in order *then* to 'educate' us in such a way that we learn to exercise power 'responsibly' ourselves. Until we understand and act to liberate ourselves we will remain unfree'.

Barriers to freedom are, in the view of libertarians, inherent in the educational structure itself. Many of these stem, says Humphrey, from the conception of the teacher as being placed in authority over students. Because he is required to take so much responsibility, his students are required to take too little. This over-assumption of responsibility is reflected in a mass of petty restrictions, many of which have nothing to do with education — rules about behaviour during lunch breaks, boarding buses, dress, hair, even using the lavatories: consider for example, the following report from *Mole Express* on the procedure to be carried out in a certain school in Manchester if a child wishes to go to the toilet during classes:

The class teacher gives him a form on which has been entered the Date, Period, Time, Subject, Pupil's Name and Form. and Teacher's Name.

The pupil takes this to the Duty or Toilet Prefect who is stationed outside the school office – which is 400 yards from the more distant classrooms – and the prefect copies the information into a logbook.

The Duty Prefect then takes the pupil into the office to get the key to the toilets. The pupil has to ask the School Secretary for toilet paper if he will need it; he will be issued with two pieces.

The pupil is then escorted to the toilet, which is unlocked for him and locked up again when he has finished. Finally he is escorted back to the main school.

'In most schools', says Ray Hemmings, in an article in *Libertarian Education* No. 13, 'kids are the oppressed majority'.

The child is a nigger, pushed around, deprived of rights, shouted at, insulted, assaulted often, punished without trial, compelled to work, hounded if absent from the assigned place at the assigned time . . .

The child is a nigger. The phrase is a significant one. It brings children into the world of the civil rights movements, relating society's treatment of the child to its inegalitarian treatment of other minority groupings. It is interesting to reflect how it has come to do so. The phrase begins in the civil rights experience of America, in the rhetoric of the radical movements. The comparative success of the movements in drawing social attention to the condition of the blacks, or, if you like, the success of the blacks in drawing attention to themselves, has made their case a paradigm for the presentation of bids for social recognition on behalf of other minority groups: and so, when the student movement wishes to draw attention to certain features of society's treatment of students, it draws on the rhetoric of the black rights campaign. We then find phrases like 'The student as nigger' –

the title of an American underground pamphlet by Jerry Farber, which is quite widely available in this country. The phrase is caught up by the English student movement and used in various alternative publications. From there it is picked up by Hemmings and its use extended again so that now it is the child who is a nigger. The evolution of the phrase illustrates a number of points about the alternative movement. There is the transatlantic origin and international movement of the concept; the medium is the student movement; and there is the egalitarian assimilation of concepts, in this case the concept of childhood, to the universe of political discourse. It illustrates, too, in my view, the way in which concepts derived from the experience of higher education are increasingly being applied in the context of school education. This movement is in a way the obverse of another movement: as the school-leaving age is raised, as more children stay on at school and more enter some form of further or higher education, the school experience is extended to more people. We have seen the implications of this for the status of the young adult. It seems that the encroachment on personal freedom which this represents generates its own counter-movement in the form of demands for society to change its whole attitude towards the young. One of the interesting things about the libertarian movement, and one of the reasons, perhaps, for its increasing significance at the present time, is its sensitivity to, its 'feel' for, this issue.

Hemmings's views are echoed by many other libertarian writers. *Libertarian Education* No. 13, for instance, which contains the article by Hemmings from which quotation has already been made, includes also the edited transcript of some remarks made by John Holt during some talks he gave at Washington University. 'It seems to me' says Holt,

that what we do in most schools (there are honourable exceptions), but what we do in most schools carries a message to children which says 'what you know, what you think, what you want, what you're afraid of, what you're concerned

about, all of these things count for nothing. The only thing that counts is what we know, what we want, what we want you to do, what we want you to be.' We don't do this as villains, but, you see, what the sum of a child or an adult or the sum of what a person knows, cares about and wants and wonders about and likes and dislikes, is concerned and worried about — the sum of these things is the person and when we deny, as we do in schools and conventional education, the validity of this person and his experience we are doing something which seems to me to be performing a kind of spiritual lobotomy on children.

Strong words: and those familiar with classrooms may — or may not — feel them to be exaggerated. But Holt's words do get to the heart of the matter. The libertarian objection to the restrictions imposed on children is not just on the grounds that they are petty and silly. Much more significant is the fact that they represent a denial, or discounting, of the child's identity. If the libertarian argument were concerned only with uniforms, hair length and toilets in themselves one might not want to spend much time on it. The point is, however, that in the institutional context they become issues (and it is the institution which defines them as issues) which illustrate the treatment of one group of persons by another. The child can recognise that these are points where his individuality is encroached upon. Of course his individuality is encroached upon much more damagingly by other things — by grading, by selection, by examinations, by teacher expectations — but he is less precisely aware of these. If the libertarian teacher is going to help his students to liberate themselves, as Humphrey puts it, he has to begin where the students can see 'the nature of the forces acting upon them'.

This brings us to the fundamental question for every libertarian teacher, which is What do we do? At once, as Humphrey points out, there is conflict. Does the libertarian teacher work within the existing system, trying to reform it, or does he attempt to

set up alternative libertarian structures?

This is a very real dilemma for libertarians. It goes very much against the grain to work within the existing system. To do so, in the libertarian view, is to help prop up the system, whereas what libertarians want to do is to tear it down and replace it. And then, what can you do inside the system? You are forced into endless, frustrating compromises, obliged to play a part which you don't believe in and which seems to you part of the problem, denied the opportunity of tackling the problem in the only way which you think will meet the case, and all the time subjected to the bureaucratic harassment of your superiors and the misunderstanding of your colleagues. And, quite apart from your attitude to the state, you are opposed to the principle of compulsory schooling anyway!

Yet, despite all this, the fundamental argument for working within the state system remains, that 'that is where the kids are (the vast majority of them anyway) and where the most oppressed of them are likely to remain'. Libertarians are very interested in, and attracted to, the idea of free schools. They believe that only in schools like these can 'truly open forms of education' take place. In a libertarian society *all* schools would be on this pattern. Libertarians are particularly interested in the newer free schools which tend to be rooted in a neighbourhood, so that poor working-class children have access to their liberating influence, and tend to see these as the spearhead of libertarian educational advance. Nevertheless, there remains a battle to be fought within the state system, and for many libertarian teachers that is where their own commitment must be.

But — in the words of Andy Cowling, in another number (12) of *Libertarian Education*: 'just what (can) an anarchist achieve in an institution built on authority, violence and expertise'? (Note the conjunction: expertise is linked with authority and violence) Cowling's article describes some of his experiences when he went to teach in a South London boys' comprehensive and was prompted by a similar article, 'Discipline Problems',

which appeared in the previous number of *Libertarian Education*. The journal has published a number of articles on this theme and from them one gets a good idea of how the state school system appears to those libertarians working within it. Sometimes the articles are by young teachers, fresh from college and idealistic, anxious to put libertarian ideals into practice as soon as they get inside the school but confronted by all the frustrations and tensions of school reality. This is, of course, the stereotype Young Teacher position: although it is hard to see why such a position should be so disparaged. An article in *Libertarian Education* (15), 'Probationary Teacher', describes such a situation: 'I decided to try to implement some of the ideas of the free-school within a normal classroom period', says the author, Chris Rose.

It was not long before I met with problems. Firstly I had not fully prepared myself for the type of situation in which I found myself. Suddenly being put into the role of an authoritarian and, despite one's dislike of such a position, finding that kids insisted on assuming that one was like any other teacher and acting accordingly. Secondly I soon found that I was compromising — the constraints of exams, syllabus, time, numbers, and the difficulty of throwing off the authority and power that the label teacher gave — all seemed to negate what I was trying to do.

Rose describes how he tried to involve children in their own learning and feels that he had some success, especially with the non-examined classes. But, naturally, this didn't happen all the time 'and the situations in between can be really hell'. Such situations led to the authoritarian intervention of the head and a general worsening of relationships. Rose found himself increasingly being forced to compromise. The process, he feels, can end only either in him being forced out of teaching or in him becoming like the other teachers: 'you really do start to think like them after hearing them day after day demanding more discipline, the cane etc'. What he needs, he feels, is support

from like-minded colleagues. The greatest problem which a libertarian teacher faces is isolation.

Now it would be very easy to dismiss this as the special pleading of inexperience. It is all the more interesting, therefore, to look at some of the articles on this theme which are by experienced teachers. 'Discipline Problems', for instance, is by a teacher with over ten years' experience. He, too, had sought to apply libertarian ideals to the ordinary classroom: but in his case he felt that libertarian ideals were not, in theory, discrepant with the official policy of the school:

This is Leicestershire, and the official line at the school is liberal, with its talk of 'self-discipline' and 'self realisation'. How can students learn self-discipline if I constantly impose it? It would *seem* that I am toeing the official line. But, in that case, why am I having problems? A hostile critic might reply that I am a 'bad teacher' — to which my retort would be that I am trying to put into practice what, theoretically, is widespread Leicestershire practice and so should, presumably, cause no problems whatever.

The conclusion does not, of course, follow. But the argument does raise an interesting point: how far is the difference between a libertarian approach to teaching and the 'liberal' one a difference of principle and how far is it a difference of practice? If one accepts, for the moment, that the approach favoured by colleges and departments of education might be not unjustly called 'the liberal' approach then as far as ideals go there may not be too great a difference between that approach and the libertarian one. There will nearly always be someone on the college staff with libertarian inclinations; reference will nearly always be made to such people as A.S. Neill; there are connections between the libertarian tradition and the 'child-centred' tradition of thinking about education; and the course is likely to have, in a vague sort of way, a libertarian strain diffused through it. So far as ideals go the liberal approach and the libertarian may not

seem too far apart.

And, in a way, this is what causes the trouble. Some students respond very powerfully to the libertarian currents in a course and when they go into schools it is libertarian ideals that they try to realise. Unfortunately, implicit in the application of libertarian values is practice which is rarely compatible with the style of school organisation. It is precisely over this relationship between principles and practice that the liberal approach is vague. The liberal ideal of self-realisation looks very like the libertarian ideal. It is only when you come down to practice that the difference is revealed. The divergence comes over the issue of teacher direction. The liberal accepts some direction of students 'in their own interests'. The libertarian is very reluctant to accept such direction. 'How can students learn self-discipline if I constantly impose it'?

It follows that for libertarian teachers situations such as this one, described by Andy Cowling, are not uncommon:

Confronted with a room full of rioting 15-year-olds, I tried to be non-authoritarian. 'If you don't want to sit down or do anything then that is fine with me. I'll sit here and read.' Immediately I'm compromising because I have to bawl my head off to make myself heard. I'm also wondering what's going to happen when the teacher next door comes in to complain about the noise. 'I don't like it here any more than you do, but if we have to be here then let's work out what we can do together that will be useful to us.'

Then comes the response from amidst the paper darts, flying chairs, thumping dominoes and twenty different arguments: 'You're the teacher, sir. You should make us sit down. You should tell us what to do and make us do it'. I experienced that situation many times . . .

Often it is hard to tell such a situation, in which a teacher is deliberately trying out a libertarian approach, from a situation in which the teacher, especially if he is inexperienced, is simply

floundering. Actually in both cases one would have thought that sympathetic understanding on the part of colleagues and the headmaster was necessary, but all too often the response is either 'He's no good. He can't control the class', or 'You'll soon learn.' Such a response is hardly helpful to the teacher who is floundering, but in the case of the libertarian teacher there is as well a total failure to even see what the exercise is all about. In the terms of our previous discussion, libertarian praxis is consistently denied.

Sometimes, of course, both types of situation coincide. The teacher is both inexperienced *and* trying to introduce libertarian ideas. In this case the kind of help the teacher needs is the advice of experienced libertarian teachers (not experienced authoritarian teachers). This is a point made in a number of articles. An attempt is being made to set up a Libertarian Education network of locally based groups, centred on particular schools if possible, which would support the teacher both in the classroom and vis-à-vis outside bodies. At the moment, as Chris Rose says, libertarian teachers often feel very isolated, especially when they are beginning teaching.

But by no means all libertarian teachers are inexperienced. Sometimes disorder in a classroom may be the result of an experienced teacher attempting to introduce new libertarian ideas. Such a situation is described in 'Discipline Problems'.

The author describes his experience with a fourth year group following a CSE course in what would appear to be either English or Social Studies. The course took the form of discussion on a variety of topics suggested by the students. The course went well for some time but then appeared to be breaking down because of a lack of self-discipline on the part of the students (they started holding private discussions). At this point, then, the issue of teacher direction raised itself.

The teacher attempted to solve the problem through discussing it democratically with the class. The conclusion he drew from the discussion was that the students were fed up with discussing

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reversed 'democratised' state system - a position  
it is felt that they should occupy, with state  
aid, at the present time.

2. facts you may not be aware of -

a) the blighting and obliteration of the noblest ideals, educational and otherwise, in Russia after the 1917 revolution were due to the "totally hostile physical conditions". One way of describing a jail or grave, I suppose.

b) the rebelling schoolkids in France in 1968 had remarkably similar educational policies and organisational structures to those of Rank & File; or rather, their leadership did. Might explain a lot. That... which brings us on to...

lot, that, which brings us on to  
part 2. The Great Uprising in 'French Schools, May/  
June 1968. The bulk of this is translation from  
a French teacher involved. It highlights what  
was essentially a self-managed struggle for self-  
directed education. [R&P lost quite use those words  
However little questioning of the schools' role  
tence as an institution 'per se' appears. Judicious  
selection of excerpts (and translation) might  
account for that. The revolt collapsed because  
"the general social and political situation was  
not mature enough to lead to major social change"

Dr maybe the Prots/Leninists/Stalinists who put the brunt in weren't ready for their particular revolution(s). Incidentally the "reimagination" of the movement slogan DTPROB to DTPROB is "No hard work" - a nice word. Semantic change at the point may be, the translation in use for the last 7 years namely 'It is forbidden To Forbid' was a truer reflection of the ethos of 1968. Read also (or instead) Anarchism In The May Movement, France 1968 - 6p from Flying Press, and Paris May 68 - Solidarity, 33p.

The above pamphlet 'Education in a Society in Transition' by Raymond Williams is also responsible for EDUCATION and REVOLUTION - A Great Experiment In Socialist Education. (i.e. 1971 till the demise: 1968 - same publisher. P.A.C.

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AGIT  
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By the time you read this RADICAL EDUCATION will be on its 3rd issue (20p). The third issue of HARD CHARGE (25p) has appeared after a year. Prin. and Radical Education 2 are both varied, interesting, and recommended - apart from the ubiquitous Farrukh Dhondy who appears in both. Pages for school-kids is hardly the acclution to anything. RE from 68 Goldhurst Terrace, London NW6. HC from 95A Shooters Hill Road, Blackheath London SE1.

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This cartoon turned out to be quite prophetic. Before moving to Leicester, and a career with IBM (30,000 a year), I lived in Amesbury Hill, near Brighton. Work involved a 10-hour day, 5 days a week. I involved a cushy 5-day-a-week job in a local small factory or such. Now it involves a full-time commitment, i.e. schoolkids go for work experience for 40 hours a week for some instead of being at school. One boy ended up doing his stint in the same branch of a giant supermarket chain that he worked in on Saturdays. He was lucky. The store averaged a reasonable number of accidents from the petty theft in kids' pockets, rather than be party to some kind of slave labour agreement. However, AMERICAN EXPRESS, a right bunch of sharks at home with exploitation, who process credit cards at various branches in Sussex, are welcoming deadfalls of 15 year old girls to do 40 hours a week of boring office routine for absolutely fuck-all. The school COUNSELLORS go along with this quite merrily. I doubt it solves some of their chronic unemployment. Job prospects in the area being what they are, not a few of the girls end up working for AMERICAN EXPRESS when they leave school. So training them in the schools time at no cost, and having them as productive workers the minute they start work, means the firm is quids in three times over as far as a kind of exploitation of the people who actually built AMERICAN EXPRESS'S new office block did so whilst on work experience.

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and wanted to do something else. He consulted them on what this should be (reading) and then tried to get it going. Again the class reverted to disorderly private discussions. In the end the teacher said he had better things to do at home and walked out.

The course 'drifted on', and then matters came to a head again. As on the previous occasion the issue was over teacher direction.

Books were given out so that we could read a story together, from which they were supposed to get ideas for a piece of writing. I asked for quiet and almost got it for long enough to announce the page. Then the talk recommenced. They weren't noisy, but just talking. I picked up a paper to read, and read for about fifteen minutes while they carried on talking.

The situation seemed alright: I was fairly happy and they seemed to be. But then two students walked towards the door, and when I asked why, one said that he didn't agree with what was going on in the room. We discussed the matter, and then I said they could do as they thought fit. The spokesman said 'Fair enough', and they walked out.

Now one could say quite a lot about the teaching that led up to this, but the chances are that one would be doing so in terms of a pattern of teaching that the author on principle rejects. One could make suggestions about content (the course as described seems uninspired, to say the least), about group management (jollyng the students along) and about giving the class a sense of purpose. But these would all involve some degree of teacher direction. And if one thinks that these suggestions describe what a teacher ought to be doing anyway, amount almost to a functional description of what being a teacher means, then surely one comes hard up against the libertarian objection of principle: teaching as it is commonly understood and practised inherently involves the manipulation of other people.

What we have, then, is a fundamentally different perspective on teaching. If we accept the libertarian position the 'helpful'

comments that might be made are all beside the point. Proffered those suggestions, the libertarian might reply that he knew all about such techniques and could have employed them if he had wished. It was not from ignorance that he did not use them but from choice.

Faced with such views, a person might well wonder whether what is at issue here is not so much a different perspective on teaching as a denial of the teaching function itself. The point would be accepted by many libertarians. The author of 'Discipline Problems' says 'a libertarian teacher is a contradiction in terms'. The role of teacher is *inherently* authoritarian.

The point is echoed by numerous other writers in the journal. Andy Cowling puts it well.

Right from the start I was cast in the role of someone who was expected to tell people what to do and punish them if they didn't do it. I was seen as an expert who was expected to tell people things and make sure they learnt it.

Stepping outside such a role, says Cowling, was made virtually impossible by the students themselves. They expected, indeed virtually demanded, that anyone who came in to teach them should assume such a role: 'You're the teacher, sir. You should make us sit down. You should tell us what to do and make us do it'.

The author of 'Discipline Problems' quotes a number of similar comments from the students in his class.

'I think that you should start telling us instead of telling us do as we please.'

'You should tell us to be quiet.'

'I think that you should be more strict because I for one don't like sitting there just talking for an hour. A lot more people will walk out in future if you don't stop the few people talking and interest the whole class.'

The final comment especially suggests considerable congruence

between students and teachers on the nature of the teacher's role. This is, of course, hardly surprising since that is the view of the teacher's role that students have been brought up to accept and expect. The directive function of the teacher's role is deeply embedded in educational practice; in the view of libertarians it is inherent in the structure.

The author of 'Discipline Problems' cites Keith Paton in support of his view that the role of teacher is inherently authoritarian, and it is perhaps worth going back to *The Great Brain Robbery* for a contemporary restatement of the libertarian rationale on such matters.

One says 'restatement' for this is, of course, the traditional libertarian position. It is interesting to see who, for Paton, the contemporary transmitters of the libertarian tradition are. In his discussion of authority Paton cites Waller, the American educational sociologist, Paul Goodman, John Holt and Timothy Leary (all Americans) and Ivan Illich, together with Bakunin and A.S. Neill. Other brief references are made to Jules Henry and Herbert Kohl (*The Open Classroom*), writers fairly widely available in paperback, and *The School that I'd like*. Because the quotation from the last of these echoes so closely the students' comments already quoted it is a useful place to begin. It is by a fifteen-year-old:

The average boy goes to school, becomes bored, gets into mischief, is punished, 'takes it out' on other boys, is crammed with knowledge for the exams, passes or fails his exams, forgets, and has learnt to hate that subject through bad teaching. The average teacher (even the idealistic sort) has to force much knowledge on boys, tries teaching without punishment, boys 'take it out' on him for the vicious masters, he becomes a vicious teacher.

Such a 'pulsation', as Waller calls it, is a product of the school system. It will help to establish what Paton gets from Waller if I

give some of his quotations from Waller together with his own comments.

The school, says Waller, in *The Sociology of Teaching* (Wiley) 'is a despotism in a state of perilous equilibrium, threatened from within and exposed to regulation and interference from without . . . the school is continually threatened because it is autocratic, and it has to be autocratic because it is threatened'.

The threat from without is the threat of bureaucratic intervention: the threat from within is the threat of pupil disaffection.

Pupils are the material with which teachers are supposed to produce results (i.e. not ends in themselves, things not persons — Paton). Pupils are human beings striving to realise themselves in their own spontaneous manner, striving to produce their own results, their own way, (recognition of praxis—incompatible with first sentence — Paton).

The teacher has to get the children to learn even when they don't want to learn. He can jolly them along, as was suggested earlier, but there is likely to come a point when the students, stepping outside their role too, are becoming too spontaneous. 'At this point the children are no longer "working". So the teacher has to put on his Authority role again. His own personality contracts behind his role again, only to expand a little later again with some more smiles and jokes to get the kids interested again . . .' (Paton). According to Waller

This pulsation of the teacher's personality with its answering change of posture on the part of the students is usually reduced to a mere conversation of gestures. This conversation is the most significant social process of the classroom.

#### Paton comments

At the point where pupils threaten to become people again (agents of praxis vis-à-vis teacher), the adult is forced back into his teacher role since he is supposed to be the sole

controller of initiative.

The teacher's authoritarianism, then, according to this analysis, is not something to do with his psychology or his values. It is structurally generated. It is not better teachers that we should be talking of, therefore, says Paton, but 'the complete abolition of the teacher role itself'.

At this point he quotes, very interestingly, Bakunin, the traditional anarchist thinker:

I receive and I give — such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination.

Such a 'continual exchange' may seem impossible to envisage in an educational institution but something very like that is described in a lengthy quotation from Neill.

I spent weeks planting potatoes one spring, and when I found eight plants pulled up in June I made a big fuss. Yet there was a difference between my fuss and that of an authoritarian. My fuss was about potatoes, but the fuss an authoritarian would have made would have dragged in the question of morality — right and wrong. I did not say that it was wrong to steal my spuds: I did not make it a matter of good and evil — I made it a matter of my spuds. They were my spuds and they should have been left alone. I hope I am making the distinction clear.

Let me put it another way. To the children I am no authority to be feared. I am their equal, and the row I kick up about my spuds has no more significance to them than the row a boy may kick up about his punctured bicycle tyre. It is quite safe to have a row with a child when you are equals.

Now some will say: 'That's all bunk. There can't be any equality. Neill is the boss; he is bigger and wiser'. That is indeed true. I am the boss, and if the house caught fire the

children would run to me. They know that I am bigger and more knowledgeable, but that does not matter when I meet them on their own ground, the potato patch so to speak.

When Billy, aged five, told me to get out of his birthday party because I hadn't been invited, I went at once without hesitation — just as Billy gets out of my room when I don't want his company.

Of course, such an exchange would not work in all educational institutions. The point is that it does, apparently, work in this one, which suggests that what is at issue is not structures as such but the particular kind of structure. Libertarians hope that, given the right kind of structure, education, in what they regard as its true sense, can flourish. We shall return to the point later. It may be helpful at this stage, however, to stay with Paton a little and consider the arguments he advances for authoritarianism being a bad thing. At bottom, of course, the argument is moral. But considerable use is made by Paton, and other libertarian writers, of a theory of natural learning.

'Man is by nature a learning animal', says John Holt, in a passage which Paton quotes:

Birds fly, fish swim, men think and learn. Therefore we do not need to 'motivate' children into learning, by wheedling, bribing or bullying. We do not need to keep picking away at their minds to make sure they are learning . . .

Or as Bertrand Russell says, in another passage quoted by Paton:

The spontaneous wish to learn, as shown in (the child's) efforts to walk and talk, should be the driving force in education.

Children have natural learning strategies, says John Holt. The effect of interposing authority into the learning situation is to block or pervert these. The child still shows a high degree of learning ability but now its efforts go not just towards solving the particular learning problem but towards solving it in a way that

the teacher endorses. In some cases the effort may be directed almost wholly to securing the teacher's endorsement. 'Whenever Authority intrudes itself', says Paton, 'one problem becomes two; in addition to the (intrinsic) discipline of understanding the world there is the extraneous problem of gaining approval.' Learning is most effective when unimpeded.

Paton puts it himself in a different way. There is, he says, a kind of biological dimension to learning. One sees this most clearly in physical things. An internal feedback mechanism tells the child when he is hungry, or is eating too much, or is tired, or needs exercise. By responding to this prompting a child learns — or would learn if he had the chance — to regulate himself in terms of his own needs. A similar mechanism, Paton suggests, operates with respect to learning. Feedback tells a child whether he is hitting the nail in right. It can also tell him whether he is behaving appropriately in the eyes of his friends. In both cases he learns to regulate his actions according to the relation between his wants and the outside world.

There is, of course, little new in this position, and one meets similar, more precisely expressed, views in many textbooks of educational psychology. The difference lies in the extent to which Paton uses this to press for autonomy in learning. If self-regulation works so well in other areas why should it not do so in education?

The key to such a process, Paton feels, is giving full scope to a person's wants. Conventional education, with its authoritarian structures, cannot do this. It is forever manufacturing false wants and foisting them on the learner. Because there is a lack of genuine response the next stage is to try to generate emotional support for the false want, which one may do either through the various forms of personal interaction or through such institutional procedures as examinations. But in both cases the 'motivation' is extrinsic and does not really correspond to the true wants of the learner. There is no other way of solving the problem than by going back to the 'time' wants of the learner and letting them be the guide. 'And so' says Paton,

we are forced into the conclusion that making children learn when they are uninterested is bound to fail, as are phoney attempts to generate interest. All attempts to pressure children against the grain of their own impulses and interests are self-defeating in terms both of personality and intellectual growth.

According to John Holt

The learner, young or old, is the best judge of what he should learn next. In our struggle to make sense out of life, the things we most need to learn are the things we most want to learn. Curiosity is hardly ever idle. When we learn this may we learn both rapidly and permanently.

Some such belief is at the core of libertarian educational thought. 'For me', says Paton, 'it is an article of faith that children should and can direct their own lives as soon as they want/need to even if only to direct themselves back to ask for protection or guidance or instruction or to be allowed to join in or watch . . .' One can advance theories of natural learning, one can draw on the theories of psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Eric Fromm, but in the end one comes back to 'an article of faith'.

Faith, in the opinion of many teachers, is contradicted by experience. If children are allowed to 'direct their own lives' in the classroom the result is likely to be the frustration and disorder described by the author of 'Discipline Problems'. The reason for this, say libertarians, is that libertarian ideas are being tried out in one part of a structure which as a whole is authoritarian. As soon as children go out of the room they move back into an authoritarian structure. Apart from the uncertainty which this causes, the effect is that tensions which are generated by the repressive structure as a whole can find outlet only in the free atmosphere of the libertarian classroom. If the structure as a whole were less repressive then not only would there be fewer tensions but their expression would not be focussed on one

classroom. Certainly, while one was moving from a repressive to a less repressive way of working it is likely that there would be an interim period of confusion and disorder but this period would be worked through and order would re-establish itself.

What sort of order would this be, and what sort of structures would establish it? Paton quotes Waller:

There is a need for a natural order in schools. That does not mean a chaotic order, or an uncontrolled one, but rather a social order which students and teachers work out for themselves in the developing situation, an order which is intrinsic in the personalities of those involved, a social order resulting from the spontaneous, inevitable and whole-hearted interaction of personalities.

The concept of a 'natural order' underlies much libertarian writing on education. Libertarians argue that, left alone, any group will tend to evolve its own kind of order, and that this order will be more stable and less frustrating than any order imposed from outside because it will correspond more closely to the psychic balance, as it were, of the personalities within the groups. There will be friction, but the conflict will work itself out, and this is healthier than the repression of conflict which occurs within an authoritarian system, which tends to exacerbate the conflict and merely defer its resolution. A 'natural' order is not a conflict-free order; it is an order in which conflict is recognised and faced and worked through.

This may work for a group as small as the class. It is when we come to structures larger than that of the face-to-face class that we run into difficulties. One solution is the representative council. School councils receive quite a lot of discussion in *Libertarian Education*. There is one particularly good article, in *Libertarian Education* No. 11, by Michael Fielding, who points out that such councils are being increasingly accepted in both this country and overseas. Indeed, in a number of European countries educational practice has gone beyond the stage of a

pupil council to a school council consisting of staff, pupils, parents and outside representatives. Moreover, these councils are not merely advisory: they run the school.

Arthur Humphrey suggests, in *Libertarian Education* No. 9, that there are two major problems with school councils. One is that many of our schools are too big for effective direct democracy to be practised. A general school council appeared to work fairly effectively at Summerhill and provided a means of corporate self-regulation not too far distant from the 'natural' self-regulation envisaged by Waller and Paton. But Summerhill was always small and was besides a self-contained, concentrated community. In larger schools some form of representation has to be adopted and this is always less satisfactory. Direct psychic interaction is confined only to a few, and self-regulation becomes so oblique as hardly to merit the name. The other is that most councils are phoney. Power remains firmly in the hands of the headmaster and the council's function seems mostly to talk about (but not decide upon) union matters such as lunchtime activities, notice-boards and cloakrooms.

Michael Fielding suggests that councils can work if the will is there. They are only possible if the head fully supports the idea in its widest, most democratic sense, and even then, says Fielding, there must be much explanation to staff, pupils and parents of what one is trying to do. Explanation and persuasion: many attitudes have to change if the attempt is to succeed.

If school councils are to try to encourage people to participate in the running of their own lives rather than letting others do it for them, then the old idea of the teacher as the sole fountain of knowledge, imparter of facts and omniscient director of all activities within the classroom must go. Pupils must be given the opportunities to develop social skills and the variety of skills associated with making choices in a multiplicity of situations. So many teachers and Heads appear to expect pupils to miraculously be able to participate

fluently and naturely and be critical and discerning in their intellectual and social behaviour when they reach the 5th or 6th year without ever being offered any genuine opportunities or encouragement to do so in the previous ten years of their school lives. Often people have expressed horror at the docility and disinterest of 5th or 6th formers and then gone on to suggest that this intellectual lethargy was either proof that school councils could never work or the root cause of their frequent failure. Such critics seldom, if ever, pause to consider that there might be some connection between such sheepishness and the authoritarian, teacher-dominated classroom methods still typical of most secondary schools today. (Fielding in *Libertarian Education* No. 11).

One way of tackling these problems, and of giving the student an experience of democratic participation, or shared responsibility as Fielding prefers to call it, which is both real and intimate is to sub-divide the school into smaller working units. Now of course such sub-division in some form or other is already done in most large schools. The difference between the existing situation and the situation that Fielding is recommending is that in the latter case the units are given far greater autonomy. They function, as far as they can, independently of each other, coming together for discussion only of matters which extend across the whole school. The important thing, is, in Fielding's view, that within each sub-unit both staff and students should work honestly together, sharing decisions, taking real responsibility, and developing together a common policy.

Such a structure might be a genuinely democratic one; but it is not specifically libertarian. Many alternative writers who do not consider themselves primarily libertarian (but just, say, socialist) would favour such a structure provided that it were real. Libertarians themselves would probably accept the structure as an advance since it would make more possible the development of libertarian approaches and any increase in democracy is to be

welcomed. Nevertheless they would probably remain uneasy about the structure, as they would about any structure. What they would prefer is the more fluid, minimal structure of many free schools. A democratic structure of the type outlined requires specification, if only to secure the continuance of democracy. Libertarians distrust specification as leading to something much too cut-and-dried. They prefer the fluid, evolving patterns suggested by the quotation from Bakunin.

Crucial to any libertarian structure is the right of participants to come or go as they please. This is a fundamental libertarian principle. Hence one of the few points common to almost all libertarians is rejection of the idea of compulsory attendance at school. From what they regard as the evil of compulsory attendance most of the other evils follow, and any structure which relies on such coercion must ultimately be rejected.

An essential part of the present education system is compulsory attendance at school . . . No conscientious objection is allowed, no pay is awarded in consideration for work done, submission to the authority of the school hierarchy is demanded and disobedience as well as absenteeism is punished. No amount of apologies that education is a privilege, that teachers are enlightened, and that the child's welfare is foremost in everyone's mind disguises the true nature of this situation; in a word it is slavery.

The child is born a 'free' citizen, so he is told, lives in a 'free' country where he is part of the 'free' world. At the age of five he learns otherwise. He becomes subject to a state decree which fundamentally affects his daily life and his whole future, which is inescapable, even unchallengeable. This is in effect, and perhaps is intended to be, a traumatic experience conditioning the person to the concept of obedience on which the authoritarian state system depends.

Compulsory attendance at school also places the teachers in a difficult position and forces them into an authoritarian

role. Because dissent cannot be expressed by withdrawal from the educational institution, it has either to be repressed or expressed as rebellion. Rebellion has to be ruthlessly crushed for the sake of the continuing operation of the establishment. It is more convenient if the pupils can be forced to submit to authority, and thus powers of coercion have to be assumed leading to a system of punishment sufficiently severe to generate mental and bodily fear in the intending dissenter. Small wonder that teachers are reluctant to give up the right to use corporal punishment as a 'last resort'. The entire relationship between pupil and teacher is soured by the fact of compulsion and this is a handicap that few teachers have the power to overcome. Not only a child's civil liberties therefore, but the whole quality of education is at stake (Jane Kingshill and Brian Richardson in *Anarchy*, 103).

It is this belief which marks the major distinction of principle between libertarians and other radical reformers. It is, of course, a point of view which attracts a lot of criticism, not least from other radicals who see the abolition of compulsory schooling as a reactionary measure which would benefit only those already privileged enough ('the middle classes') and would do enormous harm to working class children.

The reply that libertarians make (see, for example, the article by Di and Arthur Humphrey in *Libertarian Education* No. 10) is that as well as discussing the harm done by not attending school we have also to discuss the harm done by attending school. The educational system as it stands is so geared to the concept of academic success — to the exclusion of other values and abilities — that only those who are interested in and have the ability to succeed in examinable schooling will be able to 'benefit'. To insist on extending this system to people who are better off without it is far more 'reactionary' than advocating the freedom to attend school or not as the recipient wishes.

The debate continues. Gabriel Chanan and Linda Gilchrist, for

example, have argued persuasively that if values and abilities are excluded by the existing system then the sensible thing is not to abolish the system but to alter it to put things right. The libertarian reply is that however much you alter the system its evil effects will remain because they are effects not of particular policies or procedures or styles but of the structure itself. The structure is built upon coercion, and until this coercive element is removed, which can only be by the abolition of compulsory schooling, the system will not operate in the true interests either of the individual or of education. Keith Paton adds:

So long as revolutionaries are hooked on compulsory education — with its corollaries:

- (1) the monopolisation of educational resources
- (2) the packaging of values
- (3) their measurement
- (4) the doling out of life chances
- (5) education as a scarce commodity
- (6) education as administered by a special caste of

Experts —

just so long will any 'revolution' they carry out lead to a worse, not a better society.

However much one glosses over the difference between libertarians and socialists, this fundamental difference of principle remains. Their positions are very similar on some issues, which encourages each to suppose that, given sufficient 'fraternal dialogue', the other might be persuaded. At bottom, however, the libertarian position is distinct.

It is, moreover, surprisingly tenacious. Two articles, one by Colin Ward in *Libertarian Education* No. 10 and the other, a shortened version of an article originally published by Ivan Illich's Center for Intercultural Documentation at Cuernavaca, by Joel Spring in *Libertarian Education* Nos. 9 and 13, remind us of the existence of a libertarian tradition of thinking about education

which goes back at least to the eighteenth century. Joel Spring speaks of it as the dissenting tradition in education: dissenting, that is, from the whole idea of the state provision of education. William Godwin, in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* published in 1793, writes in terms very like those of the deschoolers of today:

The injuries that result from a system of national education are, in the first place, that all public establishments include in them the idea of permanence . . . public education has always expended its energies in the support of prejudice; it teaches its pupils not the fortitude that shall bring every proposition to the test examination, but the art of vindicating such tenets as may chance to be previously established . . .

. . . the idea of national education is founded in an inattention to the nature of mind. Whatever each man does for himself is done well; whatever his neighbours or his country undertake to do for him is done ill . . . He that learns because he desires to learn will listen to the instructions he receives and apprehend their meaning. He that teaches because he desires to teach will discharge his occupation with enthusiasm and energy. But the moment a political institution undertakes to assign to every man his place, the functions of all will be discharged with supineness and indifference . . .

the project of a national education ought uniformly to be discouraged on account of its obvious alliance with national government . . . Government will not fail to employ it to strengthen its hand and perpetuate its institutions . . .

Later anarchist writers were to see the danger of state education as lying in its capacity to impose goals and values on learners. Writers such as Max Stirner, whose articles on education were published by Karl Marx in 1842 in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, emphasised the importance, therefore, of the individual develop-

ing his own goods and directing his own learning. Tolstoy distinguished between culture, which he regarded as the total of all the social forces which shaped the individual, and education, which he saw as the conscious attempt to give men a particular type of character and habits. 'Education is the tendency of one man to make another just like himself.' Teaching and instruction were a means of culture when they were free, and a means of education 'when the teaching is forced upon the pupil, and when the instruction is exclusive, that is, when only those subjects are taught which the educator regards as necessary.' For Tolstoy, (using his terms) schools should be concerned with culture rather than with education; and this meant that students should be free to attend or not and free to study what they wished. Learners' values would determine the process, not teachers', nor, through them, the state's.

Among the libertarian critics of education discussed by Joel Spring two are of particular interest. The first is Francisco Ferrer, a Spanish educational reformer whose work gained international recognition when in 1909 he was executed by the Spanish government on a faked charge of having fomented a popular uprising. Ferrer argued that with the rise of industrialism in the nineteenth century governments found themselves involved in an economic competition with other countries which required a trained industrial worker. It was because of this economic need and not a general desire to reform society that education developed so rapidly. Ferrer wrote that governments wanted schools 'not because they hope for the renovation of society through education, but because they need individuals, workmen, perfected instruments of labour to make their industrial enterprises and the capital employed in them profitable.' The idealism that had originally inspired the development of education withered when it became clear that a national system of schooling by its very organisation could only serve the interests of those with political power. School teachers became:



the conscious or unconscious instruments of these powers, modelled moreover according to their principles; they have from their youth up . . . been subjected to the discipline of their authority; few indeed are those who have escaped the influence of this domination . . . because the school organisation constrains them so strongly . . .

The power of governments, said Ferrer, was 'based almost entirely on the school' – and if one thinks of Spain at that time one feels he could well have been right. The only remedy in his view was to develop forms of education which were independent of the state or any other major social institution.

Emma Goldman, the leading spokesman for anarchist thought in the United States in the early part of this century, is of interest for a number of reasons, but the reason most pertinent here, in view of our previous discussion on the relationship between libertarian and socialist thought, is her reaction to the Soviet educational system when she went to Russia in 1919. She went there believing that the revolution would result in the accomplishment of libertarian goals. What she found was 'the Bolshevik State, formidable, crushing every constructive revolutionary effort, suppressing, debasing and disintegrating everything.' She was willing to admit that the Soviet state had increased educational opportunity, but she felt that everywhere free, critical, independent thought was being sacrificed to quantity. 'State monopoly of thought is everywhere interpreting education to suit its own purpose . . . But while the monopoly of thought in other countries has not succeeded in entirely checking the spirit of free inquiry and critical analysis, the 'proletarian dictatorship' has completely paralysed every attempt at independent investigation.'

The experience of the Soviet Union and of Nazi Germany has tended, as Joel Spring points out, to confirm libertarian fears of the controlling power of State education. But the same thing can be seen in America: 'That by the middle of the twentieth century

American schools were accused of being racist and business-oriented could have been ably predicted by an anarchist of the nineteenth century.'

The continuing pertinence of the dissenting tradition is shown both by this and by the influx of new energy into libertarian thought which has come from the attempt to impose Western traditions of free, compulsory, universal schooling on the rather different societies of South America. Whatever one may think of the deschoolers' arguments there can be no doubt that they are forcing educationists all over the world to rethink and rejustify traditional positions on education.

I have said very little directly in this chapter about deschooling, since the literature is fairly available and the arguments well known. (See the bibliography for a selection of the material most widely available in alternative bookshops in this country.) Nor have I discussed libertarian views on examinations, testing, race and sex roles in education, although these receive considerable attention in *Libertarian Education*. I shall discuss alternative attitudes generally to such topics in a later chapter.

## Chapter Four



This chapter is again concerned primarily with one journal: *Hard Cheese*. I have chosen this journal for two reasons: firstly, because, although at the present time of writing only five numbers have been produced, the journal has already achieved a considerable reputation; and, secondly, because it illustrates quite different features of the alternative press from those which emerged during our discussion of *Libertarian Education*. There might be some dispute as to whether *Hard Cheese* is truly 'alternative'. I have no doubt that it is. It is printed by a small press, distributed privately through non-commercial channels, and edited, nobly, by a non-professional, Ted Bowden.

The argument would come, I think, over the style of its content. The cast of the articles is more academic than is usual in alternative publications. Certainly, the perspectives reflected in some of the articles, whether they be Marxist or ethnomethodological, would not readily find expression in traditional educational journals. Yet what is academically heretical today is often academically respectable tomorrow, and it may be that in a year or two *Hard Cheese* will appear far more respectable than it does now. There are signs that this is already happening.

But, of course, it is precisely this uncertainty about the status of academic perspectives that is the interesting thing. That *Hard Cheese* reflects this is an additional reason for choosing the journal.

In the introduction to the first number Ted Bowden sets out his editorial manifesto. He says that existing education journals tend to be too exclusive both in terms of readership and in terms of authorship. Potential readers are excluded by the high price and by the fact that such journals are often available only on a subscription basis. Authors are excluded by editorial restrictions such as those on format and length of article. More fundamentally, there is a covert 'management' of the views expressed in the journals. Editors usually have an unexamined notion of who counts as a potential contributor (students don't, for example) and what counts as a contribution (only those with heavyweight statistical apparatus, for instance). Often particular viewpoints (Marxist, Freudian) are excluded (explicitly on the grounds that they are more of 'that nonsense').

*Hard Cheese* is an attempt to break away from such patterns. It is cheap in price, economical in format, and attempts 'to cover as wide an educational perspective as possible'.

There is one further editorial principle which I hope will be retained. Bowden says that he hopes the journal will above all be 'critical'. This, is, of course, a wish fairly commonly expressed by editors, but I think Bowden means something rather more specific by it than is usually the case. Many ideas in education

tend to be taken for granted. There appears, says Bowden, to be 'hardly any questioning as regards the underlying assumptions in these ideas'. Educational discussion often tends to be uncritical because it starts from what education is. Bowden gives the writings of Peters as an example. Similarly, he says, there is very little questioning of the assumptions underlying positivism in general, and this is crucial, for traditional journals are heavily biased towards positivist approaches to education problems. Such a questioning of premises could well be the distinctive feature of *Hard Cheese*.

What would such a questioning look like? The first article of the first number is in fact a very good example. It is called 'The Psychology of Child Psychology' and it is by David Ingleby.

Ingleby's aim is, he says, to describe the 'shared corpus of concepts, attitudes and methods of enquiry into which the "fully trained" psychologist has been initiated' and then to demonstrate that 'it can only be understood in terms of its place in (to borrow Laing's useful definition) 'the political order . . . the ways persons exercise control and power over one another'. Normally such considerations are completely excluded from child psychology. Indeed, says Ingleby, if that is how psychology is to be defined, 'then the present essay is not psychology at all: but its purpose is to demonstrate that the "facts" produced by any psychology which attempts to ignore the political context of what it observes will be about as useful as, say, an analysis of a violin concerto which ignores what the orchestra is playing.'

Ingleby starts, then, from the belief 'that practically every act in relation to a child, from the moment of his birth and even before, reflects constraints dictated by that child's place in the political system'. Even if one takes apparently biological factors such as child-feeding one finds these constraints. The extent to which a mother can afford to meet her child's demands, how much food, how much *time* to give to feeding, is strongly influenced by her position in the social and political system. Conventionally, these factors are excluded from considerations

by the child psychologist: the political order is usually seen as a source of extraneous variance which must be partialled out of the data to make them truly psychological. The child is studied as if he and his family were living on a desert island. But this is quite futile. It is impossible to separate the influence of a child's environment from the socio-economic determinants of that environment. 'From the start, the responses which the child receives to his demands and activities are shaped by the fact that both his "input" and his "output" are destined for the slots which the social system will provide for them.' Parents are acting not simply in their own interests, or in those of the child, in bringing him up: unconsciously they are also 'representatives of a particular sector of a particular political system, and — ultimately — it is in the cause of the perpetuation of that system that efforts will be directed'. Psychologists, says Ingleby, have concentrated on primary socialization in the primary group. But the values of the primary group are themselves a reflection of the values of the wider social context. And, of course, if they do not reflect them closely enough, if say, parents prefer not to send their children to school, then the wider social values can be legally enforced.

But if parents are not the free agents they suppose themselves to be, nor are child psychologists. It is implicit in their role in the social system, says Ingleby, that they work to adapt people to the system rather than the system to the people. And this is true of the 'people professions' in general. All those working in the welfare system, in education, in social work, in the penal system, in psychiatry, are constrained in the same way.

This constraint seems to arise principally from three factors.

First, the 'people professions' are largely financed and administered by public authorities. This means that the people they serve, who are in practice those least likely to argue back, are in no position to dispute recommendations or negotiate outcomes.

Secondly, inherent in the very concept of the 'welfare

services' as they were set up and as they have continued to operate is the assumption of their remedial function. The welfare services intervene when things have gone 'wrong'. It is their job then to put them 'right'. They do this, says Ingleby, by 'confiscating' problems, either by institutionalising problem individuals or by defining and discussing them in specialised terms which purports to remove them from the layman's province.

Thirdly, 'the social expertise of the people professions must stop short abruptly at a certain level of the power structure'. The difficulties people face may be due as much to their position in the social structure as to personal inadequacy and may be resolvable only in terms of changes in that structure. If workers in the people professions were really concerned with helping people to lead better lives, says Ingleby, then they would be drawing public attention to the shortcomings of the structure and working actively to change it. In fact, they don't do this; firstly because they tend to accept the established social definition of their role, to such an extent that they may not even be conscious of any incompatibility between that definition and the reality of the situation; and secondly because in a very real sense such action would not be 'allowable': i.e. if they tried it they might find themselves without a job.

In the same way as the child's mentality is 'tailored to the social functions he will perform', so is that of the child psychologist. Both, says Ingleby, have to be understood in terms of position in the political order.

I have reported Ingleby's article fairly closely in the hope that this would best convey the difference in approach between *Hard Cheese* and *Libertarian Education*. Ingleby's article is quite clearly theoretical, discipline-oriented, academically professional in a way that the contributions to *Libertarian Education* are not. This is true of most of the contributions to *Hard Cheese*. It would be unfair to say that they were written by academics for academics, but it is, I think, clear that they are for those who respond to an

intellectual argument. If the basis of *Libertarian Education* is, ultimately, moral, the basis of *Hard Cheese* is, ultimately, rational.

Ingleby's article illustrates some features of the alternative press to which we have not yet given much attention. The first of these is, obviously, the concern with premises, with the assumptions and attitudes underlying our thoughts and actions. The second is that the challenge to these premises is heavily political. As was said in the introduction, one of the characteristics of the alternative press is the increased connotation it gives to the word 'political', extending its range to cover many things which in the past were not considered political at all. Ingleby's article is a good example of this, and because his angle of attack is that of a number of new Marxist critics it is worth looking at the basis of his argument in a little more detail.

In seeking to analyse the mentality of the child psychologist in terms of position in the political order Ingleby is adopting a familiar sociological approach. He is seeing the mentality not as something purely individual but as something related to a social group. An individual child psychologist will have certain beliefs, values and feelings peculiar to himself; but he will also hold certain values in common with other people in his profession. It is this 'shared corpus of concepts, attitudes and methods of inquiry into which the "fully-trained" psychologist has been initiated' that Ingleby is concerned with. For this corpus of ideas to be analysable in terms of relationship to the political order it needs to be treated, says Ingleby, not just as a self-sufficient set of ideas but as an ideology: 'the essential difference being that an ideological critique takes into account the interests which a particular mentality is defending'. Society consists of different social groups with different interests. Political analysis is concerned with the power relationships between these groups. Ideological analysis takes into account these power relationships when examining the values and ideas held by particular groups. This is, of course, the familiar Marxist position. It has three corollaries which are pertinent here. First, the identity of each

group is determined by the nature of its material, ultimately economic, relationship to other groups. The group which is dominant by virtue of this relationship can define the broader values of society. Ingleby quotes Marx in this connection: 'The same men who establish social relations conformably with their material productivity produce also the principles, the ideas, the categories conformably with their social relations'. Second, political analysis is only 'real' if it can be related to the power relationships as defined. An analysis of voting habits, for example, would be significant only if it took into account the relationships of the voting patterns to the 'underlying' political realities of the different social groupings. Thirdly, a group's perception of reality may not in fact conform with reality. Ingleby quotes Mannheim:

The concept 'ideology' reflects the one discovery which emerged from political conflict, namely, that ruling groups can in their thinking become so interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination. There is implicit in the word 'ideology' the insight that in certain situations the collective unconscious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilises it.

A 'ruling group', in Mannheim's sense, may have so succeeded in imposing its view of things on society that it does not even register things which are discrepant with that view; and on the other hand a subordinate group may have become so accustomed to this view of things that it takes it over and does not even notice when the consequences are adverse to its own interests.

The point is obviously related to our earlier discussion of 'the consensus' and consensus-mentality. It is in the interests of the 'ruling groups' in our society to play down any challenge to their position. Since they have the power to impose their definition of the situation, they can project a view of society which reflects

their interests and values and which discounts alternative perspectives as either erratic and eccentric or as anti-social. Other interest groups can be so deceived as to accept these definitions and to believe that their own interests are met within the framework of this dominant view. Of course the trick is to make them feel that the dominant view is not the expression of the interests of the ruling groups, but in some way reflects the interests of everybody. Thus a false feeling of consensus is created and in time a mentality develops which can perceive and react to reality only in terms of the categories of this supposed consensus.

The value of the kind of analysis that we have been discussing is – in the view of those who practise it – that it cuts through this confusion and 'mystification' to lay bare the nature of the interests underneath and to reveal 'the real condition of society'. Thus Ingleby shows that the child psychologists etc. are deceived about what they are doing: they are not 'helping people to lead better lives' but helping them to conform to a system which is not in their interests. Child psychologists are facilitators of exploitation. By virtue of the same kind of analysis Adelstein shows that the philosophy of R.S. Peters works to prevent social questioning in the interests of the conservative status quo. Of course the child psychologists are not conscious of their 'real' social role (they are as brainwashed as those they brainwash) and nor is Peters. The 'real' situation is revealed only by 'real' analysis. Ingleby concludes

I have tried to show that membership of the elite to which most of my readers will belong confers many powers, but entails – indeed, is conditional on – a systematic attenuation and distortion of one's awareness. To set right that 'false consciousness', it is not enough simply to set off in pursuit of a wider range of viewpoints – as if by some ingenious system of mirrors, one could see what the world would look like from a different position in the political order; one

doesn't escape so easily from the bemusement of one's own mentality, from the habits of thought and perception laid down during the many years spent socialising into a class and a profession. The only way is to analyse just what this mentality is: and the shortest way to an understanding of it, as I have tried to show, is by discovering the power-structures it props up.

It may be felt that one is hardly likely to escape from the limitations of one's own mentality except by pursuing a wider range of viewpoints. What Ingleby may have in mind is the danger of confusing a genuine comparing and questioning of positions with the lazy toleration (but not serious consideration) of views permitted by the dominant liberal ideology. The mentality of consensus, as Adelstein points out, allows the coexistence of a variety of viewpoints so long as they can be accommodated within a framework which does not conflict too sharply with the assumptions and interests of the dominant social groups. Potentially disruptive insights tend to be assimilated into the consensus and subtly defused. The fear that all alternative critics have is that they might wake up one day and find themselves on the side of the establishment. Lest it should be thought that defusing is occurring a little too readily in the present paragraph, it will be well to end by reasserting the unassimilableness of the Ingleby-Adelstein viewpoint. It is not a viewpoint which can be held along with others: it involves seeing society in a completely different way.

I want to turn now to another aspect of that 'questioning of premises' which I find such an interesting feature of *Hard Cheese*. This aspect is concerned with the premises brought to the classroom -- brought by teachers and children, those most intimately involved, but also by educational administrators and parents. There are several articles on the subject in *Hard Cheese*, but the one I have chosen is 'Expectations in classroom interaction -- a case study', by Kim Johnson, also in the first number.

It illustrates one of the principles stated in the editorial manifesto in that the author was, I think, a student. At any rate, the article is based on a special study presented as part of the course work for the Teachers' Certificate.

The article begins by reviewing the literature in the field. Differences in performance between individual children can be explained sociologically in two ways: first, as the product of antecedent factors, such as class, family size etc., and secondly as the product of organisational factors in the school itself. The first kind of explanation is probably the most familiar. An example is the work of Bernstein, where differences in performance between groups are analysed in terms of patterns of communication which have been acquired before the children get anywhere near school.

The second kind of explanation, which sees difference in performance as to do with factors located in the organisation of the school, has been met most frequently until recently in arguments about streaming. Lacey and Hargreaves have shown that once streaming has been done it tends to be self-fulfilling: but what is the basis of the original categorisation? One answer is that it is based on observable characteristics. The pupil does badly on certain tests, shows a high or low standard of ability in class. The other approach focuses on the fact that these are *teacher-observed* characteristics. The question then becomes: what is the basis of teacher categorisation? What are the expert-ations which the teacher has of the child? What standards does he or she value? What are the premisses which the teacher brings to the classroom?

Beyond this, of course, are further questions. Of the nature of the premises themselves: are they biased, eccentric, confused-racist? Of their application: which standards are in fact applied in a given situation (in selection: standards of behaviour or standards of academic ability?). Are there any checks on the operation of these standards? Do the views of other teachers work to moderate and correct or to reinforce? How do teacher

expectations, typifications and categorisations become organisational decisions?

Johnson's article does not, of course, set out to answer all these questions by itself. What it does is to report a case study in which five teachers and twenty-three pupils were interviewed and the presuppositions which they brought to the classroom to some extent exposed. By putting the two sets of expectations together Johnson hopes to get a more dynamic picture of the understanding which teachers and pupils have of each other than sociology usually provides. Particular lessons by each teacher were also observed. Throughout, emphasis is placed on teachers' expectations of academic performance in relation to the social status of the pupil.

The interviews are fascinating. How about this for an example of teacher categorisation, expectation and typification:

These kids are nothing but a bunch of louts, they fool about constantly, they're ill-mannered, discourteous, uninterested. I've even seen some of them masturbating in class.

Or, from the same teacher:

It's not that I've got anything against them, I just hate black boys. They just sit there grinning, you don't know what's going on in their minds.

Initially, the interviews were taped, 'before prohibition of this activity' (!) An extract from one of the transcripts is given below to show the kind of way the teachers talked and the way in which the bases of their categorisations emerged:

*Teacher A*

Q. What do you mean by learning?

R. Learning is shown by results . . . I know all about this idea of any experience is learning, but that's basically a lot of cock. The only time these kids (referring to the class observed) are learning is when they're made to listen and

have to reproduce what's been said . . . They're a lot of troublemakers in that class and if you don't sit on them hard, then nobody learns anything . . .

Q. You mentioned troublemakers. What do you mean by this?

R. Well, you know, the kind of kids who are forever trying to wage a regular war with you, the cocky ones who have to show off to the rest of the class, shouting out, banging desk-lids, you know.

Q. Why do you think they do this?

R. Wish I knew . . . it's mostly their backgrounds, you know, broken homes, mum's a pro -- that kind of thing . . . They probably aren't the focus of attention at home so they have to act the big guys at school. They're not that bad really -- if you get them on their own they're all right, it's just when they're with the others they play up . . .

Q. Did you know about the kids' backgrounds before you first taught them?

R. Not all of them. The head mentioned a few who had particularly bad homes before I first took them, but you get to know most of them.

Q. How do you do this?

R. Well, you talk after lessons -- that kind of thing.

Q. The kids tell you about their homes, do they?

R. No, I really meant you get to know the kids, they do sometimes tell you about home, but I suppose you pick that kind of thing up from other teachers and general comments the kids make . . .

Q. Do you think the home background significantly affects the degree of success they have in school?

R. Of course, I mean, you know all the research as well as I do. I don't have to trot it all out for you, but you can see it in operation here.

Q. In what ways?

R. Well, you know, most of them aren't interested in education and that's obviously got a lot to do with the kind of home they come from . . .

One sees clearly the sort of expectations which this teacher had of the class in question and the way he categorises these particular pupils. And one sees, too, that he explains the difficulties he is facing, or, if you like, variations in pupil performance, in terms of pupil background. He has taken in, in an unsophisticated way, the drift of 'research' findings and incorporated it into the explanations he gives of his own perception of the situation. The trouble with this kind of explanation is that by locating the cause of pupil variation firmly outside the classroom it removes from the teacher the possibility of — and the responsibility for — doing anything about it. Built into the premises with which the teacher approaches the classroom is a basic fatalism and defeatism.

The other point to emerge from the transcript is the way in which the teacher's typification is built up. The head gives some prior information about pupil background but the rest is picked up from the children themselves and from the comments of other teachers. One would like to know more about the process and about the criteria which were actually employed. Remembering how difficult it is for a pupil to escape from a typification once it has been assigned, and how pupils tend to grow to fit the typification whether it applied to them initially or not, one would like to know especially about the early stages of typification. The general attitudes of teachers might be revealed particularly clearly.

The other interviews followed the pattern of the one quoted. As Johnson says, what one sees in the transcript is the teacher as theoretician. In order to see if there was any selection between the teacher as theoretician and the teacher as practitioner, Johnson observed a sequence of lessons given by each teacher interviewed. Overt (spoken?) examples of categorisation plus

expectation were recorded and other general notes made.

In the case of teacher A, for instance, Johnson recorded such remarks as the following:

'I expect that most of you won't be able to go past question 10, so just try and get that far.'

'Come on, B, you haven't even got as far as P yet.'

'I know you've done it before. You didn't do it right then, and I don't suppose you will this time.'

And (an example, as Johnson points out, of how behaviour tends to be correlated with intelligence:)

'Look, M., I know you think like a seven-year-old, I know you behave like a seven-year-old, and if you don't try to grow up I'm going to treat you like a seven-year-old.'

An example of covert expectation was the fact that the preface to the lesson included the evidence that the material being used was also being used with the year below.

Johnson comments that what became obvious was the degree to which teacher A had expectations of the class. He had expectations about the general level, implicit in his selection of material, and about individual children, expecting them to accomplish different awards of work and some to accomplish virtually nothing. 'It is also noteworthy', says Johnson, 'that individual typification and expectation is exemplified in many instances . . .'

The picture that Johnson extracts from the interviews and the class observation is something like this:

Firstly, the teacher had in his mind a sort of 'ideal type' of pupil, both in terms of behaviour *and* background.

Secondly, the teacher judged subjectively the extent to which pupils conformed to this type.

Thirdly, on the basis of this judgement individuals and sub-groups within the class were treated differently, some receiving





support and praise, others subjected to more frequent control-oriented behaviour.

Johnson points out the importance of the comments of other teachers in establishing and reinforcing categorisation, particularly with respect to the general 'level' of the class (bad year, good class etc.). Categorisation is not just an individual matter.

The last part of Johnson's article is concerned with the worm's eye view of the process: with what the pupils said and did. Twenty-three pupils were interviewed separately and the responses to particular questions recorded. There were some general questions, such as 'what kind of teacher do you think is a good teacher?' ('Them that makes you learn') and 'what kind of teacher do you think is a bad teacher?' ('Them that try to make you look small'). Also, interestingly, 'Maddies' – defined as those with long hair (!), those who used the cane a lot, those who lost their temper easily. Some questions were also asked which had special reference to the teachers previously interviewed. These included such questions as 'What would you expect X to do if you made a noise in class?' ('She just looks at you'), 'What would you expect Y to do if you didn't do any work?' ('He don't bother with us') and 'What would you expect Z to do if you said you didn't understand?' ('Call you a bleedin' thicko'). What was striking about the responses, says Johnson, was the degree of similarity of perception of particular teachers, which suggests that the views obtained were representative. It was also clear that pupils knew fairly accurately what was expected of them, and often tailored their behaviour accordingly. 'Having typified teacher B as not caring whether two thirds of the class accomplished any work', observes Johnson, 'the social action of the pupils with this expectancy was, consistently, not to work'. Another kind of reaction is shown in the following comment, from a boy typified by most teachers as a 'lout'.

'Take G (a teacher), he's always telling us how bleedin' thick I am. I know I ain't thick, I got more brains than half the

twits in our class. I'm buggered if I'm going to work for him, though.'

A comment which expresses pretty exactly what, many people are beginning to think, are the typical effects and attitudes produced by school categorisation. In general, comments Johnson, pupils' reaction in the classroom tended to approximate fairly closely to what they perceived was expected of them.

I hope that I have quoted enough of Kim Johnson's article to justify Ted Bowden's editorial principle that there is work being done by students which is of a good enough standard to merit a wider audience than it usually gets. No one is going to pretend that Johnson's article is a major theoretical study. It is just a suggestive case study. Nevertheless, it seems to me a lot more interesting than many research articles I have read.

The article is of interest, too, because it illustrates an approach to educational investigation which many people would see as characteristic of Goldsmiths' College. It is not, of course, confined to Goldsmiths'. A growing number of researchers all over the country are making use of interactionist techniques, particularly with respect to investigation of what goes on in the classroom. But Goldsmiths' College has become to some extent identified with a particular point of view in sociology.

It would not be to the purpose of the present study to discuss that point of view in any detail. It (or they, for several related approaches are involved) is described generally in an article by Nell Keddie and Michael Young, 'New Directions: is there anything happening in Sociology?' in *Hard Cheese* (Two), which appends an introductory bibliography; and, since the article was written, in a Penguin edited by Roy Turner, *Ethnomethodology*, (Penguin Modern Sociology Readings). The approach has been criticised, sharply, by Joan Simon and Olive Banks in *Forum* (Vol. 17, No. 1). And, through what Banks calls its 'capture' of one of the early Education courses of the Open University, it has already moved some way from the

disreputability implied by its publication in 'unofficial' and untraditional journals such as *Hard Cheese* towards the academic respectability of enshrinement in straight curricula. The whole process is an interesting example of the movement of academic opinion. An insight which starts out as 'alternative', and can find expression only through the alternative press, gradually makes its way towards acceptability and publication through normal academic and commercial channels. It would be an exaggeration to say that were it not for the alternative press such insights might never be developed (in the case of ethnomethodology and phenomenology substantial development had already occurred in the United States and on the Continent); but I think it would be fair to say that the alternative press facilitates dissemination of new ideas among the academic, especially undergraduate and postgraduate, sub-culture.

One of the features of ethnomethodology is the attention it pays to the premises brought to action and to the processes of categorisation implicit in the perception and definition of situations. There is an obvious connection, therefore, between the academic orientation of the sociologists at Goldsmiths' and the character of *Hard Cheese*. It would be wrong, however, to look upon *Hard Cheese* as merely the expression of that viewpoint. The titles of articles do not tell you everything, but if I give the list of contents of *Hard Cheese* (Three) it will be seen at once that the range of the magazine is fairly wide:

#### Contents

Review: *Teacher as Stranger*: Maxine Greene

To students of English (and their teachers)

Bunking Off

Some possible reasons for abandoning lectures

True sketch of an ill-conducted schoolroom

'Theory' and 'Practice' in the Sociology of Paulo Freire

Review: *Ethnomethodology*: ed. Roy Turner

A Wage for schoolchildren means power to the schools

Review: *Tinker, Tailor – the myth of cultural deprivation*, Nell Keddie

The Young People we deserve

Building Worlds – creating fictions

All things white and beautiful

'Bunking Off' is the transcript of a taped interview with Alan and Bob, two truants; 'To students of English . . .' a plea for the teaching of English to be committed to changing perception and so, ultimately, the world; 'Some possible reasons . . .' is a course critique; 'True sketch . . .' a reprint from *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine – A Journal of Amusement and Practical Utility*, Vol. II, No. VI, October, 1853 – and so on.

It remains true, of course, that the influence of an ethnomethodological or of a phenomenalist perspective can be seen in some of the articles but that is what you would expect and, indeed, hope for, from people in contact with what is obviously a vigorous group of social scientists.

The challenge to premises can apply in all areas.

For instance, two articles in *Hard Cheese* (Four and Five) examine some of the premises we bring to subject teaching. The first of these, by Richard Gorringer, takes a timely look at the meaning of standards in English teaching with especial reference to 'The précis game'. The issue arose over a proposal to drop the précis from a new Mode 3 'O' Level English Language paper. 'Whenever it is proposed to change, or drop, a part of the traditional curriculum one line of resistance that is sure to be heard', says Gorringer, 'is that "standards" are threatened'. But what standards? Using language is a skill to do with communication, but the standards usually evoked with respect to précis are to do not with communication but with other rather arbitrary values of social acceptability.

The conventional Mode I 'O' Level English Language paper

has very little to do with testing the basic skill of using English – and a great deal to do with social control, and with testing skills which relate to certain economically necessary activities in our society. And of course these activities are given the status of 'good in themselves' by being related to absolute standards of mental growth.

Précis was originally included on exam papers at the turn of the century because the Civil Service needed people capable of producing synopses of official reports. Only afterwards was it associated with the development of certain cognitive skills – the rationalisation usually advanced to defend its inclusion in exam papers today. In fact, says Gorringer, the skills it develops are very limited. In so far as it tests understanding, it tests it in an arbitrary area unrelated to a child's reading and thinking. And in so far as it tests communicative ability, it prohibits the exploration and elaboration, the 'making one's own', that is usually thought a necessary part of developing communicative skill in children.

The argument is sometimes put forward that précis-writing develops the ability to encapsulate the main points of a passage in 'good prose'. But what is good prose? And what is good prose in this context? Gorringer took a passage from an A.E.B. paper and asked three colleagues to précis it. He also summarised it himself. The four versions had 'practically nothing in common as regards sentence construction, diction, tone, emphasis'. A limited experiment, Gorringer admits: but one which suggests that the standards by which one judges good 'précis prose' are at any rate not obvious. His conclusion is that the 'appeal to standards' argument in the case of précis is essentially bogus.

Whether one agrees with him or not, one is likely to find Gorringer's arguments increasingly echoed in the alternative press. *What* standards, *whose* standards, *why these* standards – these are quintessential alternative issues, and at a time when current educational standards are being called into question – and other

ones suggested — it is unlikely that alternative writers will stay out of the debate.

The other article is by R.J. Hine and it is called 'Political bias in physics'. The common assumption that science is value-free is being increasingly challenged in the alternative press, and any alternative bookshop will have on its shelves a number of publications exploring the relationship between science and society. Not much of this has percolated through to education yet, and Hine's article, though in itself unsystematic and limited in scope, may well be an indication of things to come.

Hine argues that science teaching serves the status quo. The selection of topics for the syllabus and the way the topics are taught require a specificity of approach which excludes questions about the limitations of the theory concerned and the values it assumes. The effect of this is to reinforce a mechanistic model of science and life at a time when mechanism is being increasingly criticised on both scientific and social grounds. The emphasis on mechanism can be seen as related to the development of industrialism. If fitted in with what industrial society demanded of its scientists: concentration on technical issues rather than on the uses to which scientific discoveries are put.

What Hine would like to see is a relaxing of the boundaries which are drawn around science. This would permit the raising of important questions as part of science teaching itself: questions about the nature of science, the place of science, its dynamic, its implications, its values. Hine suggests that one of the troubles with science is that it is presented dogmatically, as a linear unfolding of eternal truths. He would like to include in the syllabus something of the debate of scientists, the argument between rival theories, together with an account of the blind alleys up which scientists are often drawn. In this way, he says, children would get some notion of the limitations of science. And this is important. The effects of science impinge upon us all. They cannot but have a major influence on our lives. Nor can one separate them from science itself.

And if one replies that there is a confusion of categories here, that scientists as people may be moral or immoral, capitalist or Marxist, cynical or committed, etc., but as scientists when they are doing science they must be objective and neutral, then one exposes oneself to the Ingleby critique we met at the beginning of this chapter. Science is like psychology. It is a complex of values, premises, procedures and assumptions. It is a complex of values, premises, procedures and assumptions. Scientists, like child psychologists, are used by society and if they do not question the uses to which they are put then they are ipso facto voting to preserve the status quo. They are not politically neutral: they are politically conservative.

I would like, finally, to turn to another article which is concerned with the assumptions underlying educational thinking but which does not take either a sharply Marxist or a specifically interactionist or ethnomethodological approach. This is P.S. Wilson's examination of the assumption about children underlying the Plowden Report. The article is called 'Plowden Children' and appears in *Hard Cheese* (Two). Wilson argues that

the Plowden strategy is to base educational practice upon a certain theoretical view of children and their 'nature', namely, that children's education is the product of their maturation and of their learning, both of which are determined by certain 'general principles' of developmental need which are discovered by experts and which must be applied to particular cases by the teachers of the children concerned.

It is this underlying theoretical view that Wilson is challenging. He argues that three postulates are taken for granted: that 1) children's nature can be adequately described in terms of general principles or laws; 2) these laws are ascertainable by experts; 3) education normally consists in meeting the psychological needs which the experts have ascertained that the children have. All three postulates, says Wilson, rest on an assumption that mental growth is the same sort of thing as

physical growth and that the same kind of laws apply to both. Plowden's whole approach, says Wilson, is basically physicalist.

He quotes the following passage from the Plowden Report (p. 22):

The emotional aspects of the child's development, like the intellectual follow a regular sequence based on the interaction between maturational and biological factors on the one hand and experience and learning within the culture setting on the other . . . Emotional life provides the spur and in many ways gives meaning to experience

and comments

So this is what a child's 'nature' is – to be a mere focus for the interaction of genetic and environmental forces or 'spurs', whose 'meaning' is constructed entirely for him by others (his 'setting') and whose 'regular sequence' of development must remain therefore forever firmly outside his control.

and in this way the Report goes on, describing the effort by Parents, teachers, experts, everybody to determine the child's nature for him 'as inexorably as the laws of chemistry, anatomy and physiology determine his physical growth'.

But, says Wilson, children are not like that. They are human beings and human behaviour cannot be satisfactorily accounted for in those terms alone. Human beings have minds of their own. They act for various reasons not all of which are obvious to external observers. Their acts have meaning only with reference to their intentions, and any theory which purports to explain their behaviour must take this internal dimension into account. (The point is, of course, related to our earlier discussion of praxis.) Because Plowden does not do this, it does not seem to Wilson to be in any real sense 'child-centred' at all. If anything, it is child psychologist-centred. A genuinely child-centred approach, says Wilson, would have to start from the child as you find him

in real life and treat his views, both of himself and of what is happening to him, seriously.

The conclusion is, as we have seen a familiar one in the alternative press. The arguments which lead up to it can vary. There is the psychological argument (Wilson refers to Bannister and Fransella *Inquiring Man*, Penguin, 1971); there is the argument from philosophy (the need for an explanation in terms of praxis); and above all there is the moral argument. A child is a person and as a person has as much right as anyone else to have his views taken seriously. What I find interesting about Wilson's article is that from a very different standpoint he echoes the views which we have found in other parts of the alternative press – the effort to develop an egalitarian ethic, the changed attitude towards children, the repugnance felt for any form of educational compulsion, the shift to a view of human nature as active rather than passive.

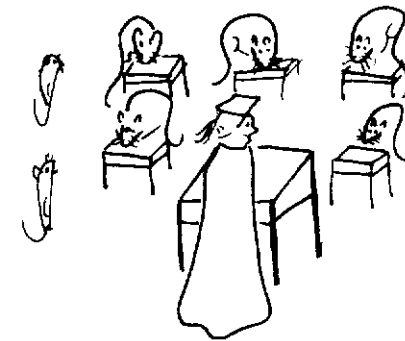
This shift is characteristic of many of the newer approaches in philosophy and the social sciences and one would expect *Hard Cheese*, with its interest in ethnomethodology and phenomenology, to reflect it. However, after having given so much attention to the theoretical side of *Hard Cheese*, it seems right to end with an example of what such a shift could mean in practice. The example comes from Colin Parfitt's article 'To students of English – and their teachers' in *Hard Cheese* (Three). Parfitt says:

When I was helping a colleague with some research on the socialisation of student teachers, I was impressed with the extraordinary articulateness and complexity with which they were able to talk about teaching and learning in the unstructured interviews we had. It tapped for me an area of intellectual resource I had been but dimly aware existed. As a teacher I need constant reminding of this resource. It is so easy to assume students are empty vessels to be filled. And yet the students' self-images were of people who *were* empty

vessels, who were inadequate in the face of daunting areas of knowledge and people cleverer than themselves . . . And yet they were able to talk at length about the problems they had making sense of the concepts of education, adjusting to the idiosyncrasies of staff, sussing out the informal power structure of the college, understanding how schools run, and relating their previous views of what children were like to how they presented themselves to you in a classroom. In their talk were the needs of a new curriculum, perhaps, a curriculum of discovery about the world with themselves as the major resource . . .

Inseparable from the application of this shift of perspective to education is a new liberation of the learner. Indeed, the implications are wider still. As Colin Parfitt says, quoting Paulo Freire, in words which sum up so much alternative thought and which could serve as an epigraph for *Hard Cheese*, we are oppressed all the while we receive the world as given.

## Chapter Five



In this chapter I want to look not at publications but at issues. Among the issues I shall be concerned with are the uses that psychological tests are put to, the way people are 'labelled' and the effects of this, the basis on which people are assigned to institutions and kept there, and racial and sexual discrimination in education. These issues have been chosen not because of their intrinsic importance — that needs no underlining — but because of their prominence in the alternative press. Almost every number of periodicals such as *Libertarian Education* and *Humpty Dumpty* contains an article on at least one of the issues, and whole numbers are often devoted to the theme. Individual

articles appear regularly in such publications as *Hard Cheese* and *Radical Education*. Occasional publications on various aspects of the issues stock the shelves of alternative bookshops. The treatment of these issues by the alternative press will, I hope, tell us something about the alternative press itself, and also about our society.

The general reasons for the prominence given by the alternative press to the issues are fairly clear. The press is reflecting the idealism of its predominantly young audience. It is an audience which is very much aware of social issues and very sensitive to any infringement of the egalitarian ethic, particularly in the form of discrimination against weak social groups. Part of the audience is likely to be engaged in teaching or other social work and meeting the problems face to face, and part of it is likely to be fairly close to the academic thinking of American social scientists such as Goffman with its emphasis on the effects of institutionalisation and on the processes by which people are assigned to institutions. The considerable expansion of social services in recent years has brought into the field a lot of young people and many more entertain the thought at one time or another of 'doing' social work at least on a temporary basis. It is not surprising, in view of the general questioning of premises that was noted earlier, that attention should turn to the premises underlying social work. 'Psychology is one of the few social science disciplines in England which has not yet begun to question its relevance either on a theoretical or practical level' are the opening words of *Humpty Dumpty* No. 3. It is in the alternative press that the questions are being put.

The *Humpty Dumpty* article from which quotation has been made was rejected by the official Bulletin of the British Psychological Society. Now of course it might have been rejected for many reasons; but among these could have been the unacceptability of such remarks as 'psychologists are spending much of their time shifting people about in systems which perpetuate injustices within our society', or 'the values that psychologists

express by their professional behaviour are those of their employers', or 'Psychometricians devise lie scales on personality tests, but rarely question the use to which these tests are put'. The general point of view is the one we have already met when discussing the *Hard Cheese* article by Ingleby. It echoes again and again in articles not just in *Humpty Dumpty* but throughout the alternative press. 'We have devoted a large part of this issue', says *Libertarian Education* No. 12, 'to the question of I. Q. testing and the way in which many of our children are slandered (even libelled) with labels such as "educationally sub-normal" "mentally retarded" and "remedial".' The article says later

Let's face it — such work is political — it is used by the establishment as part of the machinery of, and justification for, maintaining aspects of the current social system. Under the pretence of a value-free ethic, science and sociology are replacing God and anthropology as the power elite's 'proof' that the working classes in general, and blacks in particular, are inferior to the ruling class.

An article in *Radical Education* No. 5 begins

Psychology in education is becoming more and more concerned with pigeon-holing children using I.Q. and personality tests by classifying, or rather labelling them, as E.S.N., maladjusted, aggressive or socially inadequate.

Psychological techniques of behaviour modification are used, the writer continues,

to control disruptive elements in the ordinary classroom, in E.S.N. schools, schools for maladjusted and mentally handicapped children, as well as in the psychiatric hospitals. Behaviour Modification should be seen as a threat to progress and to educational revolution because it does not question the system but implements the goals of the existing system.

Given the apparently wide currency of such views among readers of the alternative press, it is hardly surprising that many articles show an extreme sensitivity about the uses which psychological techniques and practices are put to. 'The O.U. works for Enoch Powell', says the title of one *Humpty Dumpty* article, and it appears, from the alternative press, that most teachers, social workers and psychologists are working for someone equally undesirable.

Many things have contributed to this general self-questioning, but one publication especially, it seems to me, has had a big impact on alternative circles. This is Bernard Coard's *How the West Indian Child is made educationally sub-normal in the British school system*. It is a small 50-page booklet published for the Caribbean Education and Community Workers' Association by New Beacon Books Ltd. It can be found in almost all alternative bookshops and is referred to in many alternative publications. It says, perhaps, little new (it was written in 1971) but it brings home very powerfully the effect of certain standard educational practices on West Indian children.

Coard sets out to make five main points:

1. There are large numbers of West Indian children in schools for the educationally sub-normal.
2. These children have been wrongly placed there.
3. Once there, the vast majority never get out to return to normal schools.
4. The harm done is not just to their school career but to their chances in life.
5. The authorities aren't doing much about it.

Coard makes such points as that immigrants comprise nearly 17 per cent of I.L.E.A.'s school population but 34 per cent of the E.S.N. school population. Three quarters of that 34 per cent are West Indian children (though West Indians are only half of the immigrant population in ordinary schools). Nine out of

nineteen E.S.N. schools thought that 20 per cent or more of their immigrant pupils had been wrongly placed (one school estimated that between 70 and 79 per cent of its immigrant pupils were wrongly placed.) Only 7 per cent of the pupils return to normal schools: 'the West Indian child's frequently wrong placement in an E.S.N. school is a one-way educational ticket'.

Coard suggests that there are a number of reasons for the wrong placement of West Indian children in E.S.N. schools. He detects three kinds of bias: cultural bias, middle class bias, and the emotional disturbance bias. The cultural is usually takes the form of a lack of allowance for linguistic differences between West Indian English and 'standard classroom English', but there are also cultural differences of behaviour (the child is not expected to talk as much in West Indian classrooms as he is in English classrooms). The emotional disturbance bias takes the form of a lack of allowance for the fact that many West Indian children are suffering a temporary emotional disturbance due to severe culture and family shock resulting from their removal from the West Indies 'to a half-forgotten family and an unknown and generally hostile environment'. All three biases against the West Indian child apply not just to direct assessment by headmaster and teachers but also to the apparently 'objective' assessment technique. The very questions asked on the I.Q. test — the test situation itself — discriminate against the West Indian child. The vocabulary and style of all these I.Q. tests is white middle class. 'Many of the questions are capable of being answered by a white middle class boy, who, because of being middle class, has the right background of experiences with which to answer the questions — regardless of his real intelligence. The black working-class child, who has different life-experiences, finds great difficulty in answering many of the questions, even if he is very intelligent.' Being tested is itself a foreign experience to many black children, whereas white children are more used to it. Coard reminds us, too, of the considerable research



evidence to show that black children do worse in tests when the tests are conducted by a white examiner than they do when the same test is conducted by a black.

Selection procedures work, then, to the disadvantage of the West Indian child. Inside the school other factors operate against him. Teacher prejudice is one such factor. Even in its milder form of lower expectations with respect to black children, its effects can be devastating. The black child, says Coard, suffers three crucial handicaps: low expectations on his part about his likely performance in a white-controlled system of education, low motivation to succeed academically because he feels the cards are stacked against him, and low teacher-expectations which affect the amount of work expended on his behalf by the teacher and his own image of himself and his abilities. 'If the system is rigged against you and if everyone expects you to fail, the chances are *you will* expect to fail too. If you expect to fail, the chances are, you will'.

The child's image of himself, his sense of identity, comes under enormous strain. Coard tells the story of the children in one of his classes painting each other's picture. Black and white children, they all painted each other, and themselves, white: and when Coard painted a black boy black the child was very upset. 'What are you doing? You are *spoiling* me'.

One could go on: but perhaps enough has been said to show how this vivid and reasoned study goes a long way towards confirming the doubts which are expressed in the alternative press about the uses to which test procedures are put. *Humpty Dumpty*, especially, has given a lot of attention to this issue. One thinks particularly of *Humpty Dumpty* No. 3, of *Humpty Dumpty* No. 4, which is almost entirely devoted to testing and the use of tests, and of *Humpty Dumpty* No. 5, which is concerned with institutions and institutionalising. There are many articles one could comment on, and many different aspects of the issue which would be covered. There is an interesting article, for example, by Barrie Fitton in *Humpty Dumpty* No. 4

on the construction of behaviour scales and the biases built into the techniques; there is an article by a teacher working in an E.S.N. school and an article about a mother trying to fight a decision to send her child to an E.S.N. school (both in *Humpty Dumpty* No. 4); there is a group of articles in *Libertarian Education* (12), reprinted from *Race Today* on the ways the E.S.N. system works in London, and there is a very thorough technical analysis of I.Q. testing, 'Racism, Intelligence and the Working Class', in a 60-page pamphlet issued by the Progressive Labour Party (Boston, U.S.A.) generally available in this country. Out of many articles I would particularly like to draw attention to one in *Humpty Dumpty* (3) which describes the way the law has been used by American Civil Rights groups to attack discrimination, since this might be a significant indication of the way things could go in this country.

Under American law it is possible to bring federal class-action suits against local educational authorities, and these suits have proved a powerful tool 'against agencies and institutions that otherwise remain protected in a shroud of bureaucratic haze'. By means of such suits, Civil Rights groups have had some striking successes. In New York City it is now against the law to enter I.Q. test scores in a pupil's records. In San Francisco the placement of black children in classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of I.Q. tests is now prohibited. In California it is now required by law that 'psychological examination given a child as a prerequisite to his placement in a special education program for the mentally retarded be conducted in the minor's primary home language by a psychologist who is fluent in the primary home language of the minor . . .'

The author describes a particular class-action suit that he is engaged on. This is a suit filed against a school district in California by a group of Chicano parents and their children to stop the school district from further engaging in discriminatory practices against children of Mexican descent. The case has many particular provisions against such things as streaming, the use of

I.Q. tests and teaching practices which discriminate against those whose native tongue is not English. The reasoning behind the case is that since there are no significant group differences in children's ability when they start school, any differences between racial and social groups by the time they end school must be due to differential (and so unequal) treatment within school -- which is unconstitutional. The school system can, of course, claim that the differences are due to other factors -- but that is what they have to do. They have to justify such practices as the assignment of children to E.S.N. classes, whatever form of 'ability grouping' they are using, and the use of psychological tests. Furthermore, the burden is on them to prove that such practices are in the interests of the particular student involved. The benefits which accrue to the teacher, the school or the school system do not enter into the matter.

The writer of the article ('The Walrus') says that the intention behind the provisions being written into the case is to encourage teachers to describe children in terms of their actual behaviour and not through the often unconsidered and facile use of discriminatory labels.

A side issue, but a very important issue here, is that these derogatory labels, such as 'sub-normal', 'mentally retarded', 'slow learner' and many others, should be treated legally as slander.

No one -- and certainly not children -- should be slandered by the use of such derogatory terms, especially in view of the effect this can have on their future. Anyone who uses such terms should be held legally accountable.

The law may not be usable in such a way in this country, where the traditions are somewhat different, although the new legislation over racial and sexual discrimination may lend itself more to this sort of approach than legislation in the past. One of the things I find interesting about the thinking behind the case is the translation into the legal system of the same sort of shift

to an 'active' view of man that we have found in many other areas. The writer argues, for instance, that 'all decisions which affect the student's status as a student shall be negotiable and shall become functional only by mutual consent between the student, the student's advocate, or the student's parent, and the teacher or her/his advocate. This provision would greatly empower and involve students and their parents in the educational system. I feel that much 'contract learning' and 'open classroom' procedures are subtle manipulation and paternalism if students are not genuinely empowered'. The position is, of course, the libertarian one in another form. The premise which needs no speaking is that the child or student is an autonomous person and must be treated as one.

There is an obvious connection between the 'measured man' of the psychologists and the 'target man' of the teaching theorists. The connection is made very clearly in the article from *Radical Education* No. 3 (it first appeared in *Humpty Dumpty*) from which quotation has already been made. The article is called 'Don't move or I'll modify you!' and it is by Alan Sullivan. The sort of thinking that lies behind the grading and testing approach, says Sullivan, also lies behind the kind of educational psychology put across in colleges and departments of education. Prospective teachers are taught to use behaviourist methods of modifying children's behaviour. Such methods, says Sullivan, are objectionable because, as with the grading and testing approach, they assume the nullity of the subject. He is not a person whose wishes, agreement and understanding need be taken into account. He is something you do things *to*.

Probably for this reason, says Sullivan, the majority of behaviour modification programmes so far (most of them carried out in the United States) have been carried out on young institutionalised people who are least able to look after their interests. 'A great deal of research has been carried out on handicapped children, children who are being toilet trained, autistic children who find it rewarding to have physical contact

with adults, or else receive another mild dose of electric shock!! (Lovaas), children who are being reinforced for naming objects, labelling them like parrots!' Probably for this reason, too, the methods used have included electric shock treatment, food deprivation and various forms of physical control. Most writers – and readers – in the alternative press find such methods, and the whole complex of values associated with them, entirely repugnant; and though such methods are hardly a commonplace of the normal classroom, the values are precisely those prescribed by the kind of educational theory which prospective teachers are trained in.

One would think there was nothing more to say; but a gallant soul, whose letter is printed in *Radical Education* No. 4, writes back to take issue with the whole argument. It is worth looking at his views, if only to show that some who share some of the interests and premises of the alternative press can nevertheless diverge quite sharply over particular points.

The writer, R.J. Allen, points out that in normal, everyday life, people are always modifying each other's behaviour. You can't help it. If you are polite to someone you encourage them (reinforce their behaviour): if you tell them to b\*\*\*\*\* off this *doesn't* reinforce their behaviour – it encourages them to modify it. 'Bribery' of this kind is a staple of common life. All that's different about Behaviour Modification is that it is 'the planned, systematic and conscious use of these principles'.

And, certainly, if you are being scientific you treat people as objects not as individuals. That's what being scientific is; 'pre-scientific philosophy explained that stones fall because stones want to join the Earth. Modern physics ignores the stone's soul, its individuality, and formulates laws of gravity which explain how it falls. Modern psychology ignores individuality and examines behaviour. It can no more explain why a child behaves in a certain way than physics can explain why a stone falls, but it can alter the behaviour it cannot explain.' And if you want to alter behaviour consistently it's best to be scientific about it.

You are most likely to want to alter behaviour, says Allen, in the case of people for whom wrong behaviour is a problem. What's so wrong about trying out Behaviour Modification techniques on mentally handicapped and autistic children if it helps them? And if it's part of a research programme at least you're checking that it does help them (which is not always the case with the other kinds of care and attention offered them). And, says Allen, while we're on the issue of values and institutions, 'Why should not Behaviour Modification be used to benefit an institution's staff? Wiping up shit is not a pleasant task, and if the staff are any good they would use time gained for the benefit of the children.'

The point is, says Allen, that Behaviour Modification, like any other scientific technique, can be used for good or bad ends. In itself it is neutral. To refuse to use it, 'on mistaken political and moral grounds', when it might be used for a good end, is to deny help to those who might benefit.

One looks forward to future replies. But certainly Allen has put his finger on what for most writers in the alternative press is a key issue. 'Like all scientific techniques, behaviour modification is politically neutral . . .' says Allen. I think many alternative writers would take exactly the opposite view. 'The effect of Behaviour Modification', says Sullivan, 'is to make the individual conform to the existing system, to the institutions in which they are placed – whether it be a school, psychiatric or penal institutions; it makes the individual conform to the hierarchical system that can be controlled by the behaviour modifiers, the 'expert', and the person in authority.' Integral to and quite inseparable from the approach, in the view of many alternative writers, is a kind of bias which may be at odds with the interests of the individual.

The correspondence columns of *Radical Education* have become one of its best features. Another exchange, again relating to *Radical Education* No. 3, throws lights on a different aspect of the grading/assessment issue. The whole number is devoted, in

the words of the editorial, to the 'vexed question of educational theory and its role (if any) in the shaping of teachers' attitudes inside and outside the classroom'. The editorial accepts that there is much questioning of the use of *any* educational theory but argues that educators need *some* theoretical background to their work. What is wrong is not the presence of courses in educational theory but the nature of those courses. Theory is often presented in too authoritative a form, leaving no place for dialogue, not even a dialogue between disciplines. Disciplines are taught in watertight compartments. Moreover, says the editorial, 'all are related to a view of theory as a description of the world as (some people think) it stands, rather than a way of discovering how the present state of things can be changed'. Theory is too piecemeal and too static, and this is a result of it being left too much to the definition of 'experts'. 'Theory must be taken out of the hands of the experts', says the editorial – a view which would be echoed in many parts of the alternative press.

But not, necessarily in its own correspondence columns. Stephanie Orford, in a letter published in *Radical Education* No. 4, argues that 'Marxist megatheorists who expect that there can be one "coherent explanation of *all* the things that are happening in educational institutions" are asking the impossible'. It is just facile to think that there can be *one* explanation of anything as complex as education – or life. Hence the need for academics to investigate problems in a variety of ways. 'Any thinking student can then decide for himself his *raison d'être*, with all the "expert" "findings at his disposal'. As for the 'theory courses are too authoritative' business, surely, she says, 'lecturers are open to questions and criticism, and run seminars and tutorials in which a 'dialogue' can take place'. If this doesn't happen, she says bravely, it's as much the fault of the students as of the staff. If we assume it's all the lecturer's fault, aren't we ourselves falling into the trap of taking the same passive view of the student as is implied in the position we are criticising?

Yes, says Michael Young, in a reply also published in *Radical Education* No. 4, we are. However, 'Stephanie Orford seems to be living in a kind of dream world with no sense of the power relations within which students (and often lecturers) find themselves in college'. Of course, dialogue is possible and students can criticise and challenge: but what sort of freedom of exchange is possible when one participant in the dialogue is grading the other and can, through that grading, affect the life chances of the other? 'A critical aspect of any student experience, which seems to have escaped Stephanie Orford, is how the assessment practices (terminal or continuous) that dominate most colleges militate against them being rationally critical about educational problems.'

The issue of assessment and examination, as part of normal educational practice, i.e. as opposed to grading for selection for admission to special institutions, or personality or intelligence testing, has attracted much attention in the alternative press. Most periodicals refer to it fairly frequently and regularly publish articles on the subject, and some (e.g. *Libertarian Education* No. 14) devote a whole number to it. There are also a number of widely available occasional publications dealing exclusively with assessment or some aspect of it. A good, early one, still available, is Tom Fawthrop's *Education or Examination*, which, after discussing at some length the unreliability of examining, lists 17 variables which are 'among the more important factors that determine the performance of the examinee, and these are all irrelevant to the individual's intellectual capacity (i.e. intellectual capacity may or may not coincide with them – there is no necessary correlation)'. Among the variables are such things as examination techniques, question-spotting, luck, quality of teaching (e.g. good 'examination-teaching'), ignorance of criteria for marking etc. A more recent publication on the same theme is *Marked For Life, A Criticism of Assessment at Universities* by A. Powell and B. Butterworth. A perennial theme of student publications of the one-off, college magazine

type is the injustice of teaching practice assessment. And, of course, the 'hidden curriculum' effects of grading and examining are a prominent feature of deschooling literature. 'The Exams process tells us where things are really at', says *Antistudent*:

It involves a one-way judgement system. The Authorities may talk of dialogue and feedback, and verbally encourage people to be critical, but the basic structure of the Exam discourages such critical approaches. When you read a book, you read with an academic ghost looking over your shoulder: instead of thinking 'how does this fit into *my* ideas and experience?' you find yourself thinking 'how could this fit into the question on x . . . ?' The Exam/assessment system . . . colonises all your thinking and experience.

It is the point put with force by the deschooling writers. And it brings us back to Michael Young's point. Attitudes and relationships in schools, colleges and universities are influenced by assessment practices which can only be an expression of the power structure of an institution. There is, as one might expect, plenty of criticism in the alternative press of the power structure of schools and colleges, and in particular of the hierarchically distributed roles of headmaster, staff and students; but what such criticism often misses, and what is brought out well in the exchange I have quoted, is the distorting effect of the power structure on personal relationships. Many people working in schools and colleges would like to believe, with Stephanie Orford, that relationships can be free and natural. They can *feel* free and natural, say the alternative writers, but that is only because they forget about the underlying constraints. The effect of – the existence of – the constraints is brought home to you only when you move into a new situation: when, for instance, there is a student protest and students feel free to express their mind, or – an example which occurs again and again in the alternative press – when you enter a classroom perhaps for the first time and have to impose the authority (which you later take for

granted) upon a restless class. You try at first to 'relate to' individuals in the way you would outside the classroom, but it doesn't work. It works only when you assume the role ascribed to you in the hierarchical structure of educational life; but then the relationship is not free and natural. In the more relaxed atmosphere of colleges and universities the authority dimension of relationships between staff and students may be less apparent, but, say the alternative writers, so long as the people who teach are the same as the people who assess, the relationships between learner and teacher will be distorted.

In our earlier discussion of the pamphlet by Bernard Coard it was pointed out that grading and testing were only two of the ways in which social power was used to discriminate against black children. At least as potent a factor was teacher expectation. An increasing number of articles in the alternative press, amounting almost to a flood, are making the point that the same is true of sexual discrimination. 'We play a part' says Wanda Maciuzko, in an article on 'Sexism in Education' in *Radical Education* No. 1, 'in giving children a sex identity . . .'

. . . an identity which corresponds to the ideal of what is a man and what is a woman. When we use teaching materials which portray women in the stereotyped roles of passive dependent wives and mothers, we are helping to reinforce the idea of men and women playing different roles with men having the advantage role and women the disadvantaged. We also do that when we allow all sorts of sexual divisions, even simple ones such as linking up for assembly in rows of girls and boys, to go unchallenged. In secondary schools teachers doom girls to dead end jobs with bad prospects by not giving them sufficient information about careers. As well as trying to get all working class children to think in terms of making their own decisions about their own lives, we also need to persuade girls, as a doubly underprivileged group, to think in this way.

Discrimination by expectation is built into the education system. It is part of educational thinking, inherent in the premises with which we approach educational planning, curriculum development, provision for school-leavers or whatever. One finds it written in, unconsciously, to the major education Reports of the past twenty years — even when they are at their most liberal and consciously trying to correct existing biases against girls in schools and colleges. The Crowther Report, for instance, which was concerned with the education of young people between fifteen and eighteen, discussed the changes which were taking place in society and concluded that since child-rearing now only involved a brief halt in a woman's career then girls should qualify for a career before marrying. This, as Sheila Jeffreys says, is an article reprinted in *Libertarian Education* No. 15, seemed promising. The attitude to the less able girls was, however, quite different. The more able girls, the Report pointed out, had no time for an education specially suited to their career as women. The less able did have.

With the less able girls, however, we think that the schools can and should make more adjustments (not more than all but a handful have yet done) to the fact that marriage now looms much larger and nearer in the pupils' eyes than it has ever done before.

The Report concludes that 'the prospect of courtship and marriage should rightly influence the education of the adolescent girl' and recommends a concentration in their education on dress, personal appearance, and human relations. This emphasis on human relations as a subject fit for girls (but not boys) appears again in the Newsom Report. Presumably, Sheila Jeffreys remarks tartly, the assumption is that the female sex is the only one to be involved in human relations.

The Newsom Report, which was published in 1963 and was concerned with average and less able children, argued that education (for these children) should be heavily practical and voca-

tional. The effect was, however, to reinforce existing distinctions between the sexes with respect to career choice and life style. It was assumed, for example, that courses in housecraft should occupy a considerable portion of girls' time as they grew older; and the Report made what Sheila Jeffreys calls the 'disturbing suggestion' that girls in their last year at school should spend a large amount of their time running a flat attached to the school. It was to be a properly appointed flat or house in which the girls would cook and look after neighbourhood children. 'The chances of these girls or of their children ever being interested in anything else when their horizons have been thus officially limited', says Sheila Jeffreys, 'are not high'. Even when girls and boys follow the same courses, the Report envisages the teaching of the girls being oriented towards the domestic. In science lessons, for instance, for some girls 'a course might be based on investigating the nature and qualities of apparatus and materials used in the home'. And should some girls obstinately reject, temporarily, the life domestic in favour of work, the Report knows just how to help them. Girls are to be taken on visits to shops and offices to see the kind of work they might do. Boys, of course, are on visits to factories. The point is not that most girls actually do tend to work in shops and offices when they leave school, whereas boys work in factories. The question is whether school should accept that distinction and reinforce it through the nature of the courses put on. And while it may well be true that many girls would prefer their education to be biased towards the domestic, this is not the point either. The tragedy of discrimination by expectation is that those discriminated against came to share the expectations. We saw this in the case of black children; the same applies in the case of girls. Unless girls learn to think differently they will always remain discriminated against. In the view of many alternative writers, education ought actively to contribute to this revision of ambitions, interests and expectations — not reinforce old patterns of self-depreciation.

One of the ways in which patterns of racial and sexual

discrimination are reinforced in education is through the teaching materials offered to children. In particular, very many alternative publications are now beginning to draw attention to the influence children's books and children's programmes on radio and television have on children. A useful summary of criticisms of children's books is a statement prepared by a group from the Children's Rights Workshop, Cissy, and the London Women's Education Collective for the sixth Exeter Children's Fiction Conference, August 1974 and reprinted in *Libertarian Education* No. 16.

The statement is entitled 'How most picture books tell lies' and it starts by arguing that most children's picture books present a biased and distorted view of reality. 'Consciously or unconsciously, they tell lies about the way people live, work and play, about the way they think and feel.' In particular, they are subject to the following criticisms:

First, 'most children's picture books are sexist. Women (and female animals) are limited to the role of the home-bound always available mum, rarely out of an apron nor ever long out of her loving and servicing role. If she's not washing up or pouring the tea, she's happily engrossed in child care.' The fact that two out of five mothers go out to work never appears in the picture books. Correspondingly, men 'in clothes or fur', also appear as sexist stereotypes. 'Positive, brave, generous, knowledgeable, friendly, he comes into his own outside the home on excursions, holidays, in a car, in the garden, or at his tool bench. Inside, he sits, smokes, eats, reads the paper or if the children are lucky he might read them a story'. Boys and girls are stereotyped in the same way. 'Boys fight, girls play with dolly. He's the doctor, she's the nurse'. Boys and girls playing together doing the same thing are rarely shown. It follows that

Secondly, 'most children's books misrepresent home life.' The typical family shown is a nuclear middle class family consisting of mother, father and two children. One-parent families, though not uncommon in life, are seldom shown. The setting is usually

suburbia.

Thirdly, even when writers try to get away from 'the middle class assumptions of most children's picture book writing' the social reality conveyed is false and distorted. The working class stay caught in the old stereotypes: 'the inevitable unrelaxed, overcrowded, quarrelsome relationships, in undignified vulnerability to forces apparently beyond their control; the born losers. Don't working people ever agree? Can't they talk without shouting at each other? Are they always slovenly, chip-eating, fag-end smoking, roller and braces wearing, always living in a state of disorder and conflict?'

Picture books falsify, fourthly, the nature of work. People are rarely seen at work, on the line, in the office, doing the night shift. Work, if shown at all, is in the background, never in the central role it occupies in real life.

In the same way as children's books present sexual stereotypes so, says the statement, they present racial ones. Children's picture books are racist. If black people are shown in their country of origin, they are shown as primitive and naive, unable to resolve their own problems. If they are shown in our society they are shown as 'token participants' moving in a white-controlled context, 'But it is by implication that most children's books are racist; they simply don't have blacks in them'.

Finally, says the statement, 'Most children's picture books abuse fantasy.' The statement is not altogether clear at this point but I think I know what the writer means. They are not talking of *good* children's books; they are thinking of the sort of pulp children's picture book widely available at supermarkets and that sort of outlet. And their point is that such books have often no imaginative integrity. On the one hand they are false to emotional reality, they are not anchored in children's real doubts, fears and loves. On the other hand they do not commit themselves to genuine imaginative exploration. They explore neither the mysteries of the known world nor what it would be genuinely like to live in an alternative world. They are false to the imagination.

Children's picture books, concludes the statement, cannot be neutral. 'Writers and illustrators are responsible for what they create and the values they transmit. Publishers, librarians and teachers are responsible for the books they select.' It is the familiar alternative point.

The same group of people (I think) have produced another document which is generally available in alternative bookshops. It is called *Children's Books: a statement and lists from the Children's Rights Workshop*. Since it is dated August 1974 it, too, may have been produced for the Exeter conference. It does not carry the statement quoted above and in some respects it gives a better indication of the thinking behind the critique it mounts.

The introduction states that the group is looking at children's books as part of the Workshop's overall programme to

look into the different areas and levels of children's reality (at home, in the street, in institutions, at school etc) and to report on all that is being done by and for children – and against them. We want to investigate those concepts that influence on understanding of children, e.g. 'childhood', 'education', 'development' and 'family'.

In particular, the group is anxious to clarify the 'central role' played by literature and the media. They take it for granted, that is, that literature and the media are important 'socialising agents'. They themselves are concentrating on a critical examination of children's books not because they believe they have a greater influence than television but simply because one small group of people can't do everything. A critique of television programmes is certainly overdue (and at the time of writing I have not yet seen one in the alternative press) but books are what they are interested in. They argue, moreover, that all children come into contact with books when they go to school. For working class children this may be the first systematic contact they have,

and 'the influence of school readers and picture books cannot be underestimated, particularly when the reading of books and readers under supervision reinforces the "truth" and "rightness" of the contents.'

The general aims of the Children's Rights Workshops Book Project are to campaign against bad children's books, to campaign for better children's books, to help develop a grassroots system for distributing good children's books (through community action groups, local playgroups and nurseries, local libraries, radical teacher and librarian groups and traditional commercial outlets), and to help develop a critical approach to children's books. 'We do not want to censor books', they say, but to expose children's books to critical debate. As a step towards this in the pamphlet under discussion they set out a first draft of criteria which might be used in the assessment of children's books, together with a list of some 75 children's books which, they think, go some way towards meeting them.

The criteria suggested are interesting. 'We see children's books as "bad", says the group

when they feed children with bland, neatly packaged, conventional escapism, and when they reinforce (and thereby encourage) the traditional assumptions of a hierarchically divided society, the values of property and consumption, competitive individualism, and of rigid role division and stereotyping – whether of sexism, racism or ageism. On the other hand children's books are good when, in addition to any aesthetic or technical quality they honestly portray social and individual realities (both of majority and minority life styles), including the realities of emotion, fantasy and the subconscious; when they describe real social norms and conflicts, and especially when they introduce the notion of alternatives, that people do have choices in how they live, think and act, and show that these choices can be put into practice'.



More specifically, they say on page 4 that they have chosen the books in the list because they are (or do) one or more of the following:

non sexist; non racist, socially realistic; avoid class bias (and in particular give reality and dignity to working class situations); honestly portray children's reality in relationship to parents and in the world generally; explore the possibilities of children's autonomy; honestly portray children's emotions, boys as well as girls; avoid the romantic portrayal of work; avoid moralising; avoid the uncritical portrayal of social hierarchy, property and consumption, competitive individualism; show family lifestyles other than the nuclear variety; show alternative social behaviour and organisation.

I have given the list in detail because of the light it throws not just on the literary criteria evoked by the group but also on alternative values in general. In its extreme sensitivity to any form of discrimination the list is highly characteristic of alternative attitudes.

One can learn something about the application of the criteria from a publication by Cissy (the Campaign to Impede Sex-stereotyping in the Young) called *Cissy talks to Publishers*. In March 1974 a meeting was held at the National Book League of Cissy members and members of the Children's Book Circle. Several papers were read by Cissy members and a discussion followed. Afterwards Cissy published the papers, together with a transcript of the discussion, in the form of a stencilled pamphlet, and this is still conspicuous on the shelves of alternative book-shops.

Mary Hoffman, in the introductory first paper, makes the point that the group is not concerned with the Garfields and Garners (not that these writers are above criticism, but at least they are serious writers) but with the professional little tale of the sort that constitutes the majority of the 1000 new children's books published annually. It is in these that 'examples of sexism,

racism and snobbery stand out in a way that cannot be overlooked'. Ingrid Burney, in her paper on picture book heroines, gives some examples of offending categories. Many picture books have female leading characters; yet when you look closely at them you find they are false heroines and 'no self-respecting girl would want to identify with the majority of them'. There are passive females to whom things happen (Burney gives the example of *The Cow who Fell in the Canal*) and who don't happen to things. There are the 'typically feminine' heroines with simpering smiles and golden curls who win through by the exercise of 'typically feminine' virtues (as in, for instance, Ungerer's *The Three Robbers*). There are the women with 'typically feminine' vices who nag their husbands and make them do all the work. Picture books are full of wicked witches and bad fairies, says Burney: why no male equivalent? And then there is the 'helpless female' stereotype. 'When a girl is alone, the emphasis is on her rejection by her siblings and her desire to rejoin them, to have a 'special' friend. A wet creature compared with boys in a similar situation.' The stereotyping is a feature of the illustrations as well as of the text, as Helen Petit points out in her paper. In some cases the illustration is more sexist than the text. Petit gives an example from the Ladybird Key Words Reading Scheme 1A, *Play with Us*, p. 48. The text says 'Peter is in the tree' and 'Jane is in the tree'.

But what does the illustration show? Who is at the top of the tree taking all the risks? Who is at the bottom of the tree with one foot daintily on the bottom branch? Details like this make a well-balanced text into a male-dominated story.

And why, asks Petit, do the illustrations often show girls as looking surprised or shocked in situations while boys show a healthy interest in all that's new?

Bias is particularly important when it occurs in reading schemes, says Glenys Lobban in her paper.

All the recent debate about race—, class—and, more recently still, sex—bias in reading schemes has come about because it has been realised that readers teach more than reading.

The schemes 'present a picture of the "real" outside world for children and hence define acceptable and unacceptable patterns of behaviour and life-styles'. Children — she says — model their own behaviour and goals on that of the models like themselves who they read about in the schemes. Whether this be true or not it is certainly true that the range of behaviour presented in children's books (especially for the very young) is far less varied than the behaviour the children show in life. Lobban quotes the example (from a Nipper book which meets her criteria) of a small boy crying. 'Many boy children do cry but this was the only story I found where the author was not so hidebound by the stiff upper lip ethic as to refuse to show boys capable of such behaviour and feelings.'

At one point in the discussion which followed the reading of the papers, one of the members of the Children's Book Circle argued that 'The real priority is the kind of language and the liveliness of the illustrations and we can worry about the other things later on'. It is the point that Wordsworth made when defending *Jack the Giant Killer* against those people who felt that children's literature of the time was unsufficiently edifying and improving. The point is a perennial one and the imagination usually wins. However, as Mary Hoffman reminded the discussion, the group was concerned not with the really imaginative books but with 'the great mass of the market, that great bulk of books which, without making any claim to be good books, is just trundling out the same old clichés, the same old sex-stereotypes . . . It is this kind of book which most children read and which has, therefore, the widest potential for influencing them.

The stereotypes lie buried deep: as deep as language itself. Bob Dixon, in an article in *Hard Cheese* No. 3, makes the point that racialism is in a way inherent in the English language. The

word 'black', when not used strictly literally, commonly has pejorative associations: 'the black arts', the black flag', 'black sheep', 'black list', 'blackmail', 'blackguard', a 'black look'. 'White', on the other hand has favourable associations with purity and goodness. And this is true, incidentally, not just of English but of most Indo-European languages. Dixon points, too, to a sort of racialism of popular symbolism, which is seen particularly clear in the symbolic treatment of the Jew. Shylock and Fagin are familiar figures to us, but Shakespeare and Dickens were drawing on racial stereotypes already available in folk literature and oral tradition. Dixon suggests that since children's literature tends to work on the level of concealed symbolism or stereotype, its influence in reinforcing racial and sexual stereotypes may be particularly significant, coming as it does at an age when the reader is very impressionable.

Actually, when you look back at some of the books you were familiar with as children, you find that the racialism is hardly buried at all. Dixon gives some examples from *The Story of Dr Dolittle*. In this story the doctor and his animal friends are held prisoner by the King of the Jolliginki. One day Polynesia, the parrot, overhears the king's son, Prince Bumpo saying to himself that he wishes he was a *white* prince. Polynesia puts on a special voice and, pretending to be a fairy, tells Prince Bumpo that the doctor could change Bumpo into 'the whitest prince that ever won fair lady'. Then Polynesia goes back and tells Dr Dolittle that 'you must turn this coon white'. Later, Bumpo comes to see him and explains that years before he had found a Sleeping Beauty and had woken her with a kiss, as the legend instructed, 'But when she saw my face, she cried out, 'Oh, he's black!' And she ran away and wouldn't marry me'. The doctor agrees to change the prince's complexion in exchange for release from captivity and help to escape from the island in a boat. A suitable potion is prepared and the prince dips his face in it. Afterwards, 'the Prince's face had turned as white as snow, and his eyes, which had been mud-coloured, were a manly grey'.

Dr Dolittle doubts whether the effect will last, but he hopes to put matters right (after he's got away) by sending Bumpo some candy. The patterns of the story, as Dixon points out, derives from folk tale, where the shape-shifting theme is common. The frog, the beast, the monster in a well are all prisoners awaiting the release which can come only through the magic potion or the freely-given kiss. In the present case Prince Bumpo is assimilated, by virtue of his colour, to the category of the monster, albeit a somewhat comic one. The message, says Dixon, is clear: 'the black man, quite naturally, wishes to be white but he can never become white, and all that whiteness signifies, no matter how hard he tries, and how great his longing'.

An immediate reaction, when faced with such comment on what is a fairly trivial item in a child's reading, is to dismiss it as a lot of fuss about nothing. It may be worthwhile, therefore, quoting (from Dixon's article) some remarks made by black children during an experiment being carried out by some researchers in America. The researchers, Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark, presented 253 negro children with four dolls, alike in all respects save colour, and asked them to make a series of choices. The majority of children preferred the white one and rejected the black one.

On the whole, the rejection of the brown doll and the preference for the white doll, when explained at all, were explained in rather simple, concrete terms: for white doll preference — 'cause he's pretty', or 'cause he's white'; for rejection of the brown doll — 'cause he's ugly' or 'cause it don't look pretty', or 'cause him black', or 'got black on him' . . . A northern five-year-old dark child felt compelled to explain his identification with the brown doll by making the following unsolicited statement: 'I burned my face and made it spoilt'. A seven-year-old northern light child went to great pains to explain that he is actually white, but 'I look

brown because I got a suntan in the summer'.

One thinks back over some of the points made by Coard and realises that the issue is not so trivial after all.

Of course, racial (and other) bias is not confined to picture books and storybooks. Recently, the alternative press has been giving quite a lot of attention to textbooks and other books which are widely used in schools. The largest single problem in textbooks, says Chris Proctor, in *Racist Textbooks*, a recent N.U.S. publication, is the racial and social stereotype. 'Entire races are assumed to have exactly the same appearance (crinkly hair, shiny teeth, thick lips), characteristics (lazy, warlike, uncivilised) and potential (non-whites are inevitably seen doing manual jobs)'. The other main fault is simply wrong information. 'If you were Japanese, you would not think it at all strange to live in a house made mostly of paper.' Eskimos still live in igloos, the Swiss in chalets with goats and what-not on the ground floor. But perhaps the most serious criticism to be made of such books is that they treat everything from the point of view of Western cultural norms. History begins, as Proctor says, when the white man gets there. He quotes an example which is worth thinking about. It is the telling of the story of the purchase of Manhattan Island from the American Indians for a few dollars. Quite often this story is told in such a way as to point up the stupidity and primitiveness of the Indians. More recently some books have tended to make the liberal apology or criticism that this amounted to a con trick and that the Indians have a right to moral recompense for Western exploitation. But even this is to miss the point. Proctor comments:

To the Indian the notion of a person *owning* the land was ridiculous. The land cannot belong to one person, and why should one want to own it? Use it by all means, but the sale of Manhattan Island was a joke in Indian eyes. Somebody gave them four dollars to buy what cannot be possessed. It was like buying the sun to a European and seems, to me at

least, to say a great deal more for Indian culture than for European.

If one sees the episode purely through Western eyes one misses the point which is perhaps the most crucial one for Western values.

Such a discounting of cultural traditions is characteristic of much educational writing in this country; and it is particularly unfortunate when one reflects that a number of the children in our educational system were brought up to share these very traditions. But it doesn't damage only them; it also damages the native English child who will grow up to live and work in a multiracial society. In such a society sensitivity to the perspectives of others is necessary equipment for living.

For this reason Chris Proctor argues that 'it is of the greatest importance that the teacher is aware of racist or possibly racist content in what he is teaching'. Once he is aware of it he can do something about it. He can refuse to use the material, or he can use it while pointing out the limitations of the data, or, of course, he can bring the bias out into the open and make that part of the lesson. This last course would be the one most favoured by alternative writers.

But, of course, before he can do any of these things he has to recognise that the bias is there. The alternative press feels it has a part to play here, not just by drawing attention to racist or sexist assumptions, but by publishing lists of recommended books (see, for instance, *The Dragon's Teeth*, a publication of the Merseyside Community Relations Council: the N.U.S. is also producing lists both of recommended books and of books showing racist bias) and by critically reviewing books and textbooks. In the end the teacher has to make up his own mind. To help him, Chris Proctor suggests a combination of criteria. He gives first Rae Alexander's criteria, suggested in an article in *Interracial Books for Children* (August, 1970): a book would be racist:

1. If it was likely to communicate to either a black or a white

child a racist concept or cliché.

2. If it failed to give some strong characters to serve as role models with which black youth can identify and find fulfilment.
3. If it could give pain to even one black child.
4. If it could not be equally well used in an all-black classroom, an all-white classroom, or an integrated classroom.

These criteria are, as Proctor says, useful negative criteria, and he suggests that they might be used together with the draft criteria suggested by the Schools Council/N.F.E.R. Project 'Education for a multiracial society'. These are as follows:

1. People from British minority groups and from other cultures overseas should be presented as individuals with every variety of human quality and attribute. Stereotypes of minority groups in Britain and of cultures overseas, whether expressed in terms of human characteristics, life-styles, social roles or occupational status, are unacceptable and likely to be damaging.
2. Other cultures and notions have their own validity and should be described in their own terms. Wherever possible they should be allowed to speak for themselves and not be judged against British or European norms.
3. Contemporary British society contains a variety of social and ethnic groups; this variety should be made evident in the visuals, stories and information offered to children.
4. Children under thirteen should have access to accurate information about racial and cultural differences and similarities.
5. Because people and cultures of African descent have been undervalued by Western writers and historians, it is reasonable to correct that imbalance by showing black characters in positive roles and by selecting for study a

variety of African societies.

6. Because antagonism and tensions do exist among children from different ethnic and racial groups, it seems unwise to make available books or materials which reinforce the influences of the mass media by giving currency to expressions of prejudice.

I give these criteria in full, not just because they are interesting and thoughtful, and might well be helpful, but because they illustrate a coming-together of the alternative movement and the establishment. The Schools Council and the N.F.E.R. could hardly be considered as representative of alternative thought, but in this area of social concern one finds various strands of thinking coming together, and among those strands is that sensitivity to the premises of our beliefs and actions that I have argued is characteristic of the alternative press. What one finds here is another example of that passage from the alternative to the accepted which I remarked on earlier in another connection. For a long time open discussion of racist bias in our institutions could be found only in the alternative press, in pamphlets and magazines published by immigrant associations and community relations groups. Increasingly, now, these views are being expressed and discussed in publications issued by such 'official' bodies as the Schools Council and the N.F.E.R. The same is just beginning to be true of sexist bias.

It is hardly true at all yet, however, of some of the other forms of bias which the alternative press is interested in. Racism and sexism are in a sense obviously 'social' in a way that, say, bias towards a consensus-style approach is not. Consequently, comment on racism and sexism is more readily acceptable than comment on the latter. Social action against racist and sexist bias need not greatly affect the existing political status quo. Minority groups are easily assimilable to the existing political system. Women are part of it already. In the view of many alternative writers it is class bias and — what they consider the same thing — the bias

towards the status quo that really needs correcting and is so much less open to detection and exposure. It is the ideological bias in say, the teaching of science that really worries them, because no one thinks it is there. And so an article such as R.J. Hine's 'Political bias in school physics', in *Hard Cheese* Nos. 4 and 5, may well be an indication of the next line of attack for the alternative critics. Hine is concerned more with syllabus and subject than with an actual text, and in this, too, he may anticipate the development of the alternative critique.

Behind all the questions of educational bias which we have been discussing lies the issue which is at the heart of so many alternative disputes with established, or consensus, thinking: the issue of social power.

It is this which lies behind the arguments about grading and examining and about the uses to which psychological tests are put; it is this which is at the bottom of the growing unease about selection for and confinement in institutions; it is at the core of all the alternative protests about racial and sexual discrimination. One finds it at the heart of the debate about the way children should be treated and, in particular, about the way they should be treated in the classroom. It is reflected in our views of the form educational relationships should take, it enters into the very premises of our educational theories, it is part of the definition of every educational issue we face.

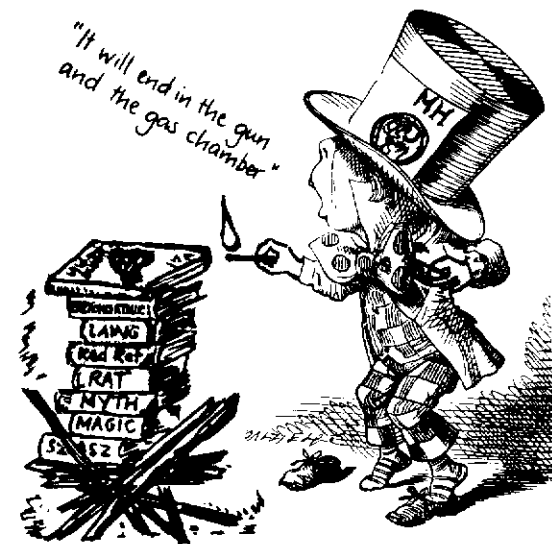
This, perhaps, is in the end what the writers in the alternative press have to show us. In education, perhaps more than in any other part of social life, the issue of social justice cannot be evaded. At a time when the contours of power in our society seem to be changing, the sort of guide provided by the alternative press, partial, naive and idiosyncratic as it often is, has a particular value.

Ian Lister has written: 'Today in the catacombs of educational thought the deschooling underground might be revealing to us the outlines of tomorrow's world' (*Deschooling*, C.U.P., 1974, p. 92). He is, of course, talking particularly about the deschoolers,

but the comment can stand for the alternative movement as a whole. Elsewhere he has written to qualify his comment slightly. He suggests that 'Alternative programmes reflect perceived weaknesses in present society'. That is, the alternative movement is 'dependent on the system it opposes, and is in danger of being a complementary part of the dominant reality' — it takes its shape too readily from the reality it opposes. I think *both* remarks are true. The alternative press *does* chart some of the currents of the future; but the shape it gives them is very much influenced by the geography of present battlefields. I think that's fine. I'd much prefer the future of education to be shaped by argument and public debate than to have it slipped across to us after having been determined by a few private persons behind closed doors. And if we are to debate fundamental issues which go beyond the limits of those presently set for educational discussion, something like the alternative press is necessary.

In any case, for those interested in education, it makes good reading.

## Bibliography



The following bibliography is intended to be representative rather than exhaustive. My criteria for including an item are firstly that it should appear in the bibliographies of at least two fairly mainstream alternative publications, and secondly that I should be able to obtain a copy currently in a London alternative bookshop. It is an indication of the sort of book, journal, article,

publication that a reader put onto the alternative press and interested in education might want to read. For a reader who wants to go further in any direction there are more books to read. Where a more detailed bibliography exists I have tried to refer to it. In the case of bias in children's literature, for instance, I refer to the helpful Statement and Lists from the Children's Rights Workshop; in the case of deschooling I refer to Ohliger's and McCarthy's comprehensive bibliography, though that does not itself appear in an alternative publication. I have confined myself to education. My bibliography does not, therefore, include material on racism or sexism, except where that material is directly related to educational considerations. It is hardly possible to separate education from other issues and a reader who wishes to place education issues in a context of wider critical comment might well wish to refer to, for instance, the admirable and extensive bibliographies contained in *Counter Course* (Penguin Education Special). A word of warning: alternative publications, like alternative groups themselves, tend to come and go. Any address I have given — although I have given only those which seem fairly permanent — may be out of date by the time this bibliography is published. Similarly, particular items I have referred to may well be unobtainable by then (although alternative bookshops don't practise stock control like ordinary bookshops and some alternative publications have a surprisingly long life). On the other hand one hopes that by then a host of exciting new publications will have appeared which will make the scene that I have described less like the Golden Age of alternative literature than like its Dark Ages.

### Shoplist

The following is a selection of places where, at the moment, alternative publications on education can be bought.

Birmingham	Birmingham Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street, Birmingham 3
	'632', Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham 29

Bradford	The Fourth Idea, 14 Southgate, Bradford 1
Brighton	Public House Bookshop, 21 Little Preston Street
Cardiff	One O Eight Community Bookshops, 108 Salisbury Road, Cathays
Dublin	Hodges Figgis, St Stephens Green
Hull	Bogus, 21 Princess Avenue
Lancaster	Single Step, 86 King Street
Leeds	Books, 84 Woodhouse Lane
Leicester	Black Flag Bookshop, 1 Wilne Street
Liverpool	News from Nowhere, 48 Manchester Street
London	Centreprise, 136/8 Kingsland High Street, E8 Compendium, 281 Camden High Street, NW1 Houseman's, 5 Caledonian Road, N1 I.S. Books, 265 Seven Sisters Road, N4 Moonfleet, 39 Clapham Park Road, SW4 Pathfinder Press, 47 The Cut, SE1 Rising Free, 155 Drummond Street, NW1 Village Books, 7 Shrubbery Road, SW16 The Publications Distribution Co-operative, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC4 (Handles bulk deliveries to bookshops of a number of alternative publications)
Manchester	Grassroots Bookshop, 178 Oxford Road
Nottingham	Mushroom, 15 Heathcote Street
Oxford	E.O.A. Books, 34 Cowley Road
Sheffield	One One Nine, 119 Spital Hill
Swansea	Singleton Bookshops, College House, Singleton Park

### Publications appearing (fairly) regularly

*Libertarian Education* Formerly *Libertarian Teacher* (first 9 issues)  
Produced by a Libertarian Education Group based roughly at  
Leicester. Available from Black Flag Bookshops, 1 Wilne Street,  
Leicester. Comes out irregularly but goes on coming out.

Among the articles specially worth noting are:

Anarchy and Education, *Colin Ward* (for information on the  
background to libertarian thought)

Schools – State, Free, None? *Di and Arthur Humphrey*

Eskimo Childhood, *John J. and Irma Honigman*

(all in No. 10)

School Councils and the democratic ideal, *Michael Fielding*

Why I resigned, *Ruarc Gahan* (a headmaster who attempted to  
develop his school along libertarian lines)

(in No. 11)

Anarchism and Education: the dissenting tradition, *Joel Spring*  
(Nos. 9 and 13)

Neill's Island, *Ray Hemmings*

The destruction of Children, *John Holt*

Junk Palace, *Colin Blundell*

Lib. Eds. lash out (a transcript of a discussion which raises  
general questions about a libertarian approach to education)

(all in No. 13)

Tolstoy's Experiments with Education, *R. V. Sampson*

Class War, *Steve Cohen* and *Mike Don* (the repercussions of the  
famous schools strikes of 1911 on schools in Manchester)

Tool of Conviviality [sic], *Nicholas Walter* (a critique of Illich)

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Drama Therapy, *Barry Cole*

(all in No. 16)

Racism in school, *Teena Gould* (No. 17)

Modern Behaviour and Education, *John Masterson*

What do schools do? *James G. Lergessner*

(both in No. 19)

### Special Issues

No. 12 Devoted largely to I.Q. testing and the selection and  
treatment of E.S.N. children.

No. 14 On exams and examining. See especially 'Why exams?',  
*Michael Duane*; 'Exam Resistance', *Arthur Humphrey*

No. 15 Sex, sex roles and education.

No. 18 Largely devoted to the case of *Manuel Moreno*, a  
libertarian teacher recently dismissed from his post  
because, it appears, of his values and attitudes.

### Anarchy

A long-lived journal dating back to a time before anyone talked  
of the alternative press. Its interests are, of course, far wider  
than education.

Among the articles on education are:

No. 18 Comprehensive Schools

No. 21 Secondary Modern

No. 24 Goodman's Community of Scholars

No. 53 After School

No. 64 Misspent Youth

No. 71 The Sociology of the School

No. 73 The Free School Idea

No. 82 Braehead

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- No. 92 A Tale of Two Schools: Risinghill and Kilquahinity
- No. 101 Approved Schools and detention centres
- No. 103 The Rights of the Young
- No. 107 The Present Movement in Education (Paul Goodman)
- No. 111 Programmed Instruction/Piaget
- Also, *Libertarian Education: an introductory anthology*  
(May, 1971)

The numbering of volumes is that of the old series. A new series has just started.

#### *Radical Education*

From the editorial to the first number:

Most socialists have not seen any need for a socialist theory of education. They have seen the orthodox theory – Peters, Hirst, Piaget, Bernstein, Skinner, Bruner, Banks, Halsey and the rest – as being 'neutral' theory and therefore quite acceptable. We, however, take an opposing view: that the orthodox theory must be challenged, and alternatives disseminated. And a socialist theory of education will be developed not by academics in cloisters but by the people at the coal-face of education, the teacher and student.

Edited by Nigel Hewlett, Lin Layram, Liz Muir, Gail Parfitt, Douglas Holly among others (it varies from number to number). Published from 86 Eleanor Road, London E8. Comes out termly.

#### Among the articles:

- No. 1 An experiment in education, *Ray Chatwin* (a description of Finnish attempts to democratise the structure of schools)  
Sexism in education, *Wanda Maciuszko*  
The making of teachers, *Douglas Holly*
- No. 2 An experiment in Germany, *Alan Miles* (a study of

the work of Fritz Karsen)

Black kids, class strife, *Farrukh Dhondy*

- No. 3 Bursting the Musgrave Banks: a critique of standard educational sociology, *Ron Best*  
Why is educational theory so boring? *Nigel Wright*  
In on the Act: the whys and wherefores of the 1870 Education Act, *Roger Greenhough*  
Don't move or I'll modify you, *Alan Sullivan*

- No. 4 Right to Learn: a response to the editorial, *The Right to Learn Group*.  
Education in Chile, *Susan Carstairs*

No. 54 Middle School: inside a Chinese school, *Maggie Wilson*

Bulloch: an uncomplimentary look at the Report, *Nigel Hewlett*

- No. 5 Aaargh! How comics persuade, *Tim Minogue*  
The new hard line—reform revolution: a discussion, *Doug Holly and Gabriel Chanan*

- No. 6 Progressive education and the working class, *Ken Jones*  
Education, programmes and people, *Quintin Hoare*  
Teaching literature, *Neil Galbraith*

#### *Hard Cheese*

Edited by Ted Bowden, and available from him at 95a Shooters Hill Road, Blackheath, London SE3. Not available on a subscription basis, but you can be included on the mailing list. Goes on coming out.

#### Articles:

- No. 1 The psychology of child psychology, *David Ingleby*  
The teacher as researcher: a key to innovation and change, *John Bartholomew*

- A few notions about the word 'Conscientization',  
*Paulo Freire* translated by Manuel Vaquerizo
- The Politics of Reading, *Neil Postman*
- Expectations in classroom interaction – a case study,  
*Kim Johnson*
- The transmission of an educational ideology,  
*Ted Bowden*
- No. 2 The theory and practice of youth work in one large  
Youth Centre, *Alan Dearling*
- Plowden Children, *P.S. Wilson*
- Authority in education, *Andrew Puddephat*
- New directions: is there anything happening in  
sociology? *Nell Keddie* and *Michael Young*
- The making of educational failures, *Yvonne Beecham*
- The making of a course critic, *Trevor Pateman*
- No. 3 To students of English – (and their teachers),  
*Colin Parfitt*
- Some possible reasons for abandoning lectures  
*Phil Grierson*
- 'Theory' and 'Practice' in the sociology of Paulo Freire',  
*Dennis Gleeson*
- A wage for school-children means power to the  
schools, *Farrukh Dhondy*
- The Young People we deserve, *Michael Winwood*
- Building Worlds – creating fictions, *Ted Bowden*
- All things white and beautiful, *Bob Dixon*
- Nos. 4/5 Sociology of education: radical or reactionary?  
*Geoff Whitty* and *Denis Gleeson*
- Coping with Rosla, *Paul Tompkins*

- A look at the meaning of standards in English  
teaching; or, The Precise Game, *Richard Corringe*
- The probation officer as cultural dope, *Ian Pierce*
- Theory as Practice, or a comment on the 'Do as I say  
not as I do' problem, *Philip Stone*
- Problems of coding speech codes, *Trevor Osborne*
- Behaving like kids, *Janet Gay* with *Peter Brennan*,  
*Alan Herbert*, *Stephanie Johnson*, *Phillipa Nugent*
- Stalky and Co. and Co., *Bob Dixon*
- Sticking to the rules: some comments on the language  
and class debate, *Colin Parfitt*
- Political bias in school physics, *R.J. Hine*
- Roots of fascism, *Greta Sykes*

#### *Y-Front*

'An irregular schoolkids paper'. Very lively. No. 4 contains list  
of 23 other current 'schoolkids papers'. *Not* to be confused with  
school magazines.

#### *This Magazine is about education*

'A Scottish Sister to *Radical Education*.' Available from  
Jennifer Herbert, 34 Longformacus Road, Edinburgh EH16 6SE.

#### *Blackbored*

Ran for 4 issues, then merged with *Rank and File* and was never  
heard of again. Pity. The best written of alternative education  
journals, close to young teachers, and with a nice freshness.  
Copies can still be found in alternative bookshops, so I have  
included it here.

A number of journals carry the occasional article on education  
among them.

#### *Humpty Dumpty*

Concentrating, of course, on psychology. But see especially

*Humpty Dumpty* No. 4 on testing and No. 5 on institutions and institutionalising.

*Communitas*

Published by N.U.S. Community Action and Environment Project, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1. See, for instance, No. 32, which contains 'Alternatives and Critiques in Post-school Education'.

*Case-Con*

Primarily for social workers, but see, for instance, No. 16, 'The Children's Issue'.

*Children's Rights*

A journal which ran for a few issues and then folded. It was edited by Julian Hall and had as editorial advisers A.S. Neill, Leila Berg, Michael Duane, Paul Adams, John Holt, Nan Berger, Vivien Berger, and Robert Ollendorf.

*Science for People*

The bimonthly journal of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science. Occasionally an article on education: e.g. in No. 25, 'Towards a Radical Science education'.

*Resurgence*

See especially Vol. 4 No. 6, which contains an interesting article by Vinoba Bhave giving an Indian perspective on the formal/informal education issue.

*Peace News*

The occasional article: e.g. on the Leeds Free School (*Peace News* 7th June 1974)

*Teaching London Kids*

Published by the London Association for the Teaching of English.

*Further Left*

A socialist magazine for teachers in Further and Higher Education.

*Radical Statistics*

'We are looking into the possibility of demystifying teaching material for use in School.'

Available from Liz Atkins, 105 Noel Road, London N1.

**Some current 'one-offs'**

Journals which appear regularly tend to have organisation, or organisations, behind them. More typical of the alternative press is the occasional, 'one-off' publication.

*The Great Brain Robbery*, Keith Paton

Running to a second edition. Is this a record?

*Anti-Student*

Published by the Antistudent Pamphlet Collective, 248 Bethnal Green Road, London E2.

*Pied Paper*

'Produced collectively by a group of student teachers and others.'  
Available c/o Middle Flat, 15 York Road, Exeter.

*Enigma*

'Produced by a student school collective.'  
Available c/o Woodstock Market, 308 Fawcett Road, Southsea, Portsmouth.

*Stuff the System*

A collection of ideas and opportunities for alternative learning about development. A kit written by Janice Giffen and Mick Lowrie, published by the Voluntary Committee on Overseas Aid and Development.

*Education and Society*, Chanie Rosenberg

A Rank and File pamphlet. Part One, 'Education under capitalism'. Part Two, 'The Great Uprising in French Schools'.

One or two other currently available left-overs from the campaigns of 1968 are:

*Ten Days that shook the University*, Situationist International

*The Students and the Revolution*, Rudi Dutschke

*The High School Revolt*, Steve Chainey

(For a full bibliography on students, 1968 and the campus revolts see *Counter Course*, edited Trevor Pateman, Penguin)

*Rat, Myth and Magic*

A political critique of psychology. Among the articles included are 'How psychology fails the teacher', 'People in experiments', 'Humanistic psychology', 'Fighting the intelligence test', 'Perception', 'Sexist psychology', 'The anti-socialist functions of group psychotherapy', 'Women and the normal curve', 'The values on which psychology rests', etc.

*Our Schools serve the ruling class*

A manifesto presented to the 22nd Congress of the Quebec Teachers' Corporation.

*Educational Idiocy in Scotland*

Published by a libertarian group, Dundee Solidarity.

*School stoppers Textbook*

'For people who want to fight back against their schools' (American)

*The Student as Nigger*, Jerry Farber

*How the West Indian Child is made educationally subnormal in the British school system*, Bernard Coard

Published for the Caribbean Education and Community Workers' Association.

*School does matter*, The Right to Learn Group

*Course-Con*

A handbook on social work causes.

*Out of our heads*

Course criticism at Liverpool University 1971.

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*L.S.E.: a question of degree*, Bob Dent

(There are always several college or university publications of the underground house-magazine type on the shelves of alternative bookshops. Often these contain criticism, usually of courses particular to that institution. See, e.g. at the moment *Slumberland*.)

*Marked For Life: a criticism of assessment at universities*,

H. Powell and B. Butterworth

Obtainable from A. Powell, Institute of Classical Studies, 31/4 Gordon Square, London WC1.

*Rights of Children*

Report of first national conference on children's right.

Published by N.C.C.L.

*Children have Rights*

A series of discussion papers by the children's Committee of the N.C.C.L.

No. 1 Children in School

No. 2 Handicapped Children

No. 3 Children in Residential Care, Adoption

No. 4 Children at Home

No. 5 The Children and Young Persons Act

*Children's Books*, Children's Rights Workshop

Published by the Children's Rights Workshop (Book Project)

73 Balfour Street, London, SE17.

Contains very useful lists of books and also excellent bibliographies

of 1) British articles on sexism in children's books (26 items)

2) North American and Swedish material on sexism (28 items)

3) British material on racism in children's books (15 items)

4) selected American material on racism (8 items), 5) British

material on class bias in children's literature (12 items).

*Racist and Sexist Images in Children's Books*

A collection of American articles but including books available

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to English children, published by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, New York, taken from its bulletin, *Interracial Books for Children*. Published in England by Writers and Readers Cooperative, 14 Talacre Road, London NW5 3PE.

*The Dragon's Teeth*, Merseyside Community Relations Council  
Racial bias in children's literature. A collection of articles and 3 lists of recommended books (not just fiction; includes text books, 'background books', in general books used in school).

*Cissy Talks to Publishers*, Campaign to impede sex-stereotyping in the young (Cissy)  
Collection of papers on sexism in Children's books. See also 'Children's books', an article in *Spare Rib* No. 26, Summer 1974.

*Racist Textbooks* Chris Proctor  
N.U.S. publication

*Nowhere to Go*  
A report on the plight of autistic adolescents, published by the National Society for Autistic children.

*How to set up a Free School*, Alison Truefitt  
57, White Lion Street, London, N1

*Brighton Free School*

*White Lion Free School Bulletin*

*School Without Walls*  
c/o Patricia Holland, 8, 9, 10 Neal's Yard, London, WC2  
'A collection of lists and notes for people critical of the present schooling system.' Contains some preliminary bibliographies.

*Action Education Kit*, S.C.A.N.U.S.  
Published by Student Community Action, National Union of Students. A collection of articles in 3 sections: what's been happening; critiques; future possibilities. Contains useful bibliography.

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*Language and Class: a critical look at the theories of Basil Bernstein*  
Harold Rosen

*Language and Class Workshops*  
Compiled by a group, edited by Harold Rosen, and available from him at 41a, Musude Avenue, London, N10 2EH.

*Stepney Words*, 1 and 2

*When I was a Child*, Dot Starn  
A childhood autobiography published by Hackney Workers Educational Association as part of a continuing project on local social history called 'A people's autobiography of Hackney'.

### **Background books**

A number of books, not alternative in themselves, are commonly referred to in alternative bibliographies. Because they help to define the nature of the alternative critique I have included a selection here, applying the same criteria as were used in the case of alternative publications themselves.

### **Libertarian education**

Paul Goodman      *Compulsory Miseducation* (Penguin)  
                         *Growing up Absurd* (Vintage)  
                         *The Community of Scholars* (Vintage)  
(See also 'The present movement in education', in *Anarchy 107*)

John Holt            *How Children Learn* (Penguin)  
                         *How Children Fail* (Penguin)  
                         *The Underachieving School* (Penguin)  
                         *Freedom and Beyond* (Penguin)

A.S. Neill            *Summerhill* (Penguin)  
                         *Free Child* (Jenkins, 1937)  
                         *That Dreadful School* (Jenkins, 1953)  
                         *Talking of Summerhill* (Gollancz)

	<i>Neill and Summerhill</i> (Penguin)
Herbert Read	<i>To Hell with Culture</i> (Routledge, 1963) <i>Education Through Art</i> (Faber, 1958)
L. Tolstoy	<i>On Education</i> (ed. L. Wiener) (University of Chicago, 1968)
Homer Lane	<i>Talks to Parents and Teachers</i> (Allen and Unwin) (See also <i>Homer Lane and the little Commonwealth</i> , by E. Bazeley, 1928 and 1948)
W. David Wills	<i>The Hawkspur Experiment</i> (Allen and Unwin 1945) <i>The Barns Experiment</i> (Allen and Unwin 1941) <i>Throw Away Thy Rod</i> (Gollancz, 1960)
Michael Burn	<i>Mr Lyward's Answer</i> (Hamish Hamilton, 1964)
S. Stuart	<i>Say, An Experiment in Learning</i> (Allen and Unwin)
R.F. Mackenzie	<i>A Question of Living</i> (Collins, 1963) <i>Escape from the Classroom</i> (Collins 1965) <i>The Sins of the Children</i> (Collins 1967) <i>State School</i> (Penguin)
Leila Berg	<i>Risinghill: Death of a Comprehensive School</i> (Penguin)
Herbert Kohl	<i>The Open Classroom</i> (Methuen) <i>36 Children</i> (Penguin)

### Deschooling

See first of all Ian Lister's *Deschooling: A Reader* (Cambridge University Press) for a definitive collection of articles and a

useful 'quotational bibliography'. Regularly cited in all alternative bibliographies are:

Ivan Illich	<i>Deschooling Society</i> (Penguin) <i>Celebration of Awareness</i> (Penguin) <i>After Deschooling, What?</i> (Writers and Readers Publishing Collective)
Paulo Freire	<i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> (Penguin) <i>Cultural Action for Freedom</i> (Penguin)
Everett Reimer	<i>School is Dead: An Essay on Alternative in Education</i> (Penguin)

See also *Education Without Schools*, edited by Peter Buckman, a collection of articles (published by Condor); especially 'Life-long learning or lifelong schooling?'

There is a comprehensive, quotational bibliography on deschooling by John Ohlinger and Collen McCarthy, 'Syracuse University Publications in Continuing Education', and 'ERIC Clearing House on Adult Education'.

Also, 'What do schools do?' by James Lergessner in *Libertarian Education* No. 19, a review with selected, fairly up-to-date references.

### Children

Paul Adams (ed.)	<i>Children's Rights</i> (Panther), including contributions by A.S. Neill and Michael Duane
Nan Berger	<i>Rights: A Handbook for People Under Age</i> (Penguin)
Philippe Ariès	<i>The Centuries of Childhood</i> (Penguin)

The origin of much of the argument that childhood is, in Lister's words, a 'modern invention'.

See also J.H. Plumb, 'Children, the victims of time', in *In the Light of History* (Allen Lane, 1972)

And see also *Children Rights* above.

### Counter culture/Utopia/Personal Liberatum/Madness

I have taken the heading from *Antistudent's* bibliography to refer to a commonly grouped selection of books.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Norman O. Brown | <i>Life Against Death</i> (Sphere)  |
| Norman Cohn     | <i>The Pursuit of the Millenuim</i> (Paladin)   |
| D. Cooper (ed.) | <i>The Dialectics of Liberation</i> (Penguin)<br><i>The Death of the Family</i> (Penguin)   |
| M. Foucault     | <i>Madness and Civilisation</i> (Tavistock)   |
| R.D. Laing      | <i>The Divided Self</i> (Penguin)<br><i>The Politics of Experience</i> (Penguin)<br><i>The Politics of the Family</i> (Penguin)<br><i>Self and Others</i> (Penguin) |
| H. Marcuse      | <i>One Dimensional Man</i> (Sphere)<br><i>Eros and Civilisation</i> (Sphere)  |
| C. Rogers       | <i>Freedom to Learn</i> (Houghton Mifflin)<br><i>On Becoming a Person</i> (Houghton Mifflin)  |
| T. Roszak       | <i>The Making of the Counter Culture</i> (Faber)  |

### Academic (mostly sociology)

A number of straightforward works are referred, especially where they support the alternative case. References could be legion

here, but I have restricted myself to a selection, observing the criteria outlined above.

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| J.W. Douglas                    | <i>The Home and the School</i> (Panther)                                       |
| E. Goffman                      | <i>Asylums</i> (Penguin)   |
| D.H. Hargreaves                 | <i>Social Relations in a Secondary School</i> (Routledge)                      |
| Jules Henry                     | <i>Culture against Man</i> (Tavistock)<br><i>Essays on Education</i> (Penguin) |
| B. Jackson and<br>D. Marsden    | <i>Education and the Working Class</i> (Penguin)                               |
| C. Lacey                        | <i>Hightown Grammar</i> (Manchester University Press)                          |
| F. Musgrove                     | <i>Youth and the Social Order</i> (Routledge)                                  |
| J. Partridge                    | <i>Life in a Secondary Modern School</i> (Penguin)                             |
| R. Rosenthal and<br>L. Jacobson | <i>Pygmalion in the Classroom</i> (Penguin)                                    |
| Willard Waller                  | <i>The Sociology of Teaching</i> (Wiley)                                       |
| <b>Others</b>                   |  |
| The School of<br>Barbiana       | <i>Letter to a teacher</i> (Penguin)   |
| Ivan Berg                       | <i>Education and Job: The Great Training Robbery</i> (Penguin)                 |
| E. Blishen (ed.)                | <i>The School that I'd Like</i> (Penguin)                                      |
| G. Dennison                     | <i>The Lives of Children</i> (Penguin)   |
| Ronald and<br>Beatrice Gross    | <i>Radical School Reform</i> (Penguin)   |

J. Hajnal	<i>The Student Trap</i> (Penguin)
J. Kozol	<i>Death at an Early Age</i> (Penguin)
D. Rubinstein and C. Stoneman	<i>Education for Democracy</i> (Penguin) A much-cited collection of essays on primary, secondary and tertiary education. Together with <i>Counter Course</i> , it gives a comprehensive introduction to the range of Left egalitarian comment on education.
J. Searle	<i>The Campus War</i> (Penguin)
C. Silberman	<i>Crisis in the Classroom</i> (Random House)
W. Van der Eyken and B. Turner	<i>Adventures in Education</i> (Penguin)
C. Weingartner and Neil Postman	<i>Teaching as a Subversive Activity</i> (Penguin)

The accused have never denied the charge of misusing the funds of the student union. Indeed, they openly admit to having made the union pay some \$1500 for the printing and distribution of 10,000 pamphlets, not to mention the cost of other literature inspired by "Internationale Situationniste". These publications express ideas and aspirations which, to put it mildly, have nothing to do with the aims of a student union. One has only to read what the accused have written, for it is obvious that these five students, scarcely more than adolescents, lacking all experience of real life, their minds confused by ill-digested philosophical, social, political and economic theories, and perplexed by the drab monotony of their everyday life, make the empty, arrogant, and pathetic claim to pass definitive judgments, sinking to outright abuse, on their fellow-students, their teachers, God, religion, the clergy, the governments and political systems of the whole world. Rejecting all morality and restraint, these cynics do not hesitate to commend theft, the destruction of scholarship, the abolition of work, total subversion, and a world-wide proletarian revolution with "unlicensed pleasure" as its only goal.

In view of their basically anarchist character, these theories and propaganda are eminently noxious. Their wide diffusion in both student circles and among the general public, by the local, national and foreign press, are a threat to the morality, the studies, the reputation and thus the very future of the students of the University of Strasbourg.

—*Summation of the judge, Strasbourg, 1966.*



## THE UNDERGROUND AND EDUCATION

A Guide to the Alternative Press

*Anarchy. . . Y-Front. . . Blackbored. . . Radical Education. . .  
Humpty Dumpty. . . The Great Brain Robbery. . .  
Hard Cheese. . .*

In recent years there has been a rich mushrooming of alternative press publications in the educational field; and at a time when educational premises are coming increasingly under strain the alternative critique is assuming considerable importance. Yet it is available only in the often short-lived and inaccessible publications of the underground press. Most people with an interest in education will have come across at least some of these, but such random acquaintance is unlikely to give the reader an impression of the full range of the underground debate. Hence a need for this guide, in which Mike Smith deftly and sensitively brings together the various parts of the alternative critique and allows us to see it as a whole. He first distinguishes some of the premises underlying the critique and then goes on to examine particular alternative positions, including the libertarian and the Marxist ones.

Among the most distinctive publications discussed in detail are, for instance, *Hard Cheese*, *Antistudent*, *The Great Brain Robbery* and *Libertarian Education*.

Finally, he reviews alternative positions on such issues as the use and abuse of psychological tests, the way people are 'labelled' and the effect of this, children's rights (or lack of them), and racial and sexual discrimination.

For those readers wishing to continue the pursuit, there is a full bibliography of underground material and a list of stockists throughout Britain.

**Mike Smith** began teaching at the age of seventeen in a small primary school in Africa and since then has taught all ages from six to seventy-five. He actually likes teaching. His subject is English but he has the evil and ineradicable habit of teaching and researching in other areas as well. His four children are doing their best to bring him up properly. His politics are definitely Wiltshire.

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11 New Fetter Lane,  
London EC4P 4EE

0 416 89540 7